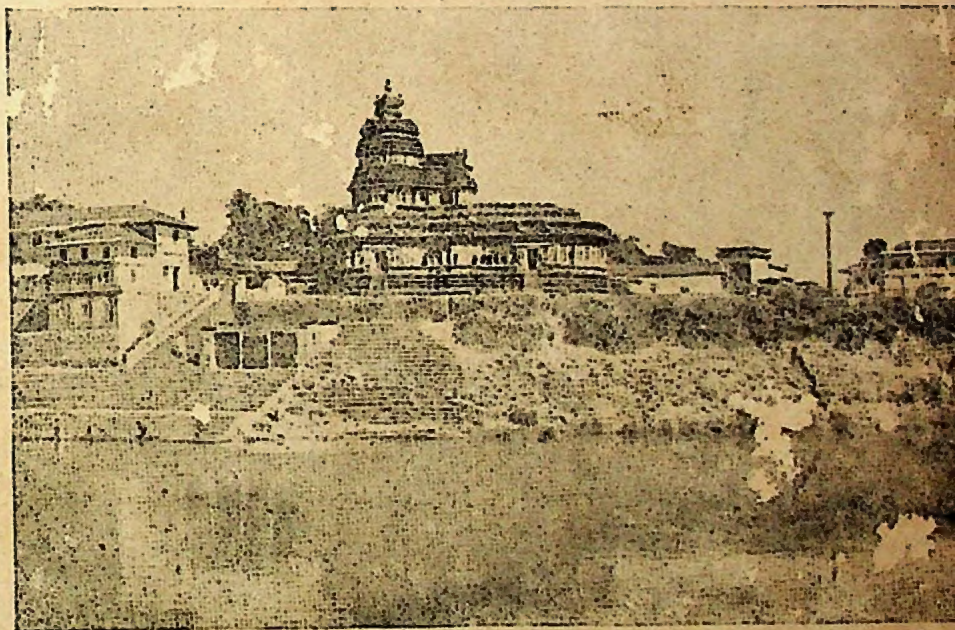


# THE THRONE OF TRANSCENDENTAL WISDOM

SRI SANKARACHARYA'S  
SARADA PITHA IN SRINGERI

(Second Revised Edition)



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K7.

K. R. VENKATARAMAN

Akhila Bharata  
SAMKARA SEVA SAMITI PUBLICATION

1967



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(SECOND REVISED EDITION)

BY

K. R. VENKATARAMAN

*(Formerly Director of Public Instruction, Pudukkottai.)*

AKHILA BHARATA SAMKARA SEVA SAMITI

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## FOREWORD

---

BY HIS HIGHNESS

MAHARAJA SRI RAMA VARMA PARIKSHIT OF COCHIN

**F**OR a proper understanding of the religious and cultural history of India, a study of the growth and organisation of monasteries is necessary. This work is an attempt; perhaps the first of its kind, at tracing the evolution of a Matha—the first one (and the most influential)—established by Sri Sankaracharya. The Pontifical seat of Sarada Pitha in Sringeri is otherwise called the Vyakhyanasimhasana or Dharmasimhasana. The author has based the historical account on epigraphical and literary (Sanskrit and Kannada) evidences, and the few traditions that he has mentioned, do not conflict with recorded evidence.

Besides tracing the relations of empires and kingdoms with the Matha and the royal benefactions, the author has reviewed briefly the great and abiding contribution of the Sringeri Gurus and their Sishya-Paramparas to Advaitic thought and the building up of a vast literature on Vedanta in the post-Sankara ages.

The last chapter deals with shrines and temples. Description of the architectural features and the art motifs, and the significance of the Murtis of Gods and Goddesses are given due prominence, and relevant Dhyana Slokas are also included.

I have very great pleasure in congratulating the author on his indefatigable researches on the subject and in commending this valuable work to the public who are interested in the holy institutions of the Hindus and specially to the 'Astikas' who are 'Sishyas' of this holy Matha. I may, in conclusion, state here that the present Mathadhipati, His Holiness Abhinava Vidyatirtha Svami-pada, has evinced great interest in the work.

*Camp* : Kanchirapilly Palace,  
Periyaram (Trichur Dt.) }  
6—10—1958.

RAMA VARMA  
(Maharaja of Cochin).



## INTRODUCTION

---

By DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

**R**IGHT through the ages, the founders of religions and the great path-finders of humanity have delivered their messages to chosen disciples, and almost invariably, their teachings were propagated by groups of *sishyas* or apostles through whose interpretation the world became cognizant of those abiding truths, that have, according to the needs of the times and the exigencies of the world situation, been manifested to those who were attuned to them. The apostles of Christ, Ananda and the immediate disciples of Lord Buddha, and the faithful companions of Prophet Mohammed, in their several ways, interpreted their masters' teachings and founded Churches, Viharas, Mosques and other centres of spiritual realisation and teaching.

Religion in India, like many other aspects of India's soul force, was essentially individual rather than congregational. The *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Gita* and the various *Dharma Sutras* and *Grihya Sutras* were the result of exhortations or flights of thought communicated by Rishis or other types of evolved beings to their *antevasis* or *sishyas*.

The evolution, therefore, of India's several *Darsanas* or systems of philosophy and of many types of observance, ritual, prayer, worship and metaphysical speculation was like the growth of the trunk and branches of a tree springing from a root and extending in manifold directions rather than a pyramid culminating in a point. Each *Darsana* represented a special experience or revelation, and such experience is both the test and fulfilment of spiritual and religious discipline.

It is, therefore, not surprising with the rise and progress of avowedly antagonistic doctrines which began to question the validity of old premises and the inspirational character of old scriptures.



that, in self-defence, there were evolved in India great counter movements designed to give battle to scepticism, atheism, agnosticism and nihilism on the one hand and on the other to eliminate untoward varieties of so called religion based either on wrong ideals of allegiance to darker powers or on self-mortification or the cult of fierce deities whose favour had to be sought by gruesome or non-moral sacrifices and observances.

It is a proof of the wide range and tolerance of Hindu thought that it embraces and includes in its ambit philosophies and cults which even deny the validity of the *Vedas* or which deny the existence of a personal God or *Isvara* or which attribute to the infinite play of atoms the growth of the body, mind and soul. The time, however, came when the very foundations of Hindu culture was sought to be disrupted both as a result of political subversions and by reason of the aggressively proselytizing campaign, pursued sometimes under royal patronage by the followers of controversial and debased varieties of the originally pure Buddhist, Jain and Sakta faiths and of nimistic and *Vamachara* movements.

The inherent resilience of the Indian mind produced the inevitable reaction and, as often in human history, the need of the times produced the inevitable *Avatar*. There arose successively men like Samkara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabhacharya, and many other religious leaders, who stemmed the tide of opposition and re-established and revived the pristine Indian spirit, based alike on *vichara* or investigation and on elucidation of the fundamental and universal doctrine. *Tattvam-asi*.

The pervasiveness and supremacy of the *Atman* the interpretation of *Rita*, *Karma* and *Samsara*, the assertion of the continuity of existence and the elucidation of the ideals embodied in the expressions *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Bhakti* involving, as they do, the possibility of devotion to a personal god-head and the simultaneous realisation of the mystery of what lies beyond of personal god-head, all these ideas were regenerated by the Adi Samkaracharya and his immediate predecessors and successors.

Sri Samkaracharya was the foremost of these later seers, who brought the doctrines of *Vedanta* home to the people and who was



also a lyric poet of surpassing excellence, who could contemplate and describe the attributes of every manifestation or *avatar* of the Supreme and who was, at the same time, an intrepid metaphysician who established the doctrine of *maya* and commented on the entire spiritual literary treasure-house of India to prove the universality of the Supreme Soul—*Paramatman*, the identity of the Supreme Soul with all life and the illusory nature of the world phenomenon.

It is needless for us to worry over the exact date of Samkara's birth about which there is much controversy, or about the authenticity of the stories narrated about him. Suffice it for us to realise that in Him India possessed a man of unfathomable intellect as well as of the highest spirituality. The most likely date of His birth is, perhaps, the 7th or 8th century A. D. He was acquainted with Bhartrihari and this, probably, fixes the date as well as the circumstance that one of His disciples Sivasoma is mentioned in a Cambodian inscription of A. D. 878.

As the author of this valuable book points out, Sri Samkara-charya's advent was at a time of spiritual and moral chaos. The Buddhist culture had suffered a great change from the pure and simple teachings of the master and there were many other subversive and destructive teachings that were being actively propagated. Samkara, feeling that there was a necessity to integrate the Indian thought, not only travelled all over India discussing and persuading as He went and not only wrote His commentaries on the *Upanishads*, the *Brahmasutra* and the *Gita*, but also deemed it necessary to establish centres of religious instruction and propaganda in several parts of India.

Born in far off Kalady in Travancore, Sri Samkara manifested miraculous physical and spiritual energy. He established mathas in the Himalayas, on the shores of the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea and in the Karnatic country at Sringeri, which was associated with the name of Rishyasringa and was situated on the banks of the Tunga River and juxtaposed to its confluent the Bhadra.

It is needless to deal with the long narratives and *Samkara Vijayas* that have dwelt on the several miracles connected with Him, because the greatest miracle of all is His life itself and the fact that



in 32 years, from His birth at Kalady to His *mukti* at Kedarnath, He compressed the labour of centuries of intellectual and spiritual illumination. His greatest contribution to the history of world thought is His spirit of reconciliation of seemingly contradictory scriptural teachings and His assertions of those doctrines which are now inextricably connected with His name and described as *Advaita*.

Sri Samkrra installed in his *Pitha* at Sringeri, Sarada Devi representing the *Brahma Vidya* and also established the *Sri Chakra*, and gave to his chief disciple Sri Suresvaracharya a *Sphatika Linga* of Chandramaulisvara and the murti of Ganapati. Sri Sankara thus established the worship of personal divinities, and at the same time insisted on the formlessness, the omni-presence and the eminence of the Supreme, thus satisfying the several needs of all aspirants to spiritual realisation.

Various Churches have emerged as a result of the teachings of the apostles of Jesus Christ,—both Papacy and the Greek Orthodox Church, tracing their origin to St. Peter, and innumerable other churches and sects. The Islamic Caliphate was both a temporal and spiritual throne. The Zoroastrian religion had a series of inspired evangelists, Judaism had its high priests, and in India itself there had been many religious centres based on temples or mathas. But it is a most remarkable circumstance that, whereas most of these religious foundations have had great and holy men to preside over them, they have also seen the emergence of many self-seeking and corrupt Popes, Caliphs, Mathadhipatis or Gurus. It is to the glory of Sringeri Pitha that from the time of its foundation by the Adi Samkaracharya, it has had a continuous and uninterrupted series of occupants, who, however different in their personal history and in their intellectual calibre, have all along maintained their spiritual purity and contributed to the continuous inspiration of Sringeri as an exemplar and model of devotion and self-surrender.

Sri Ramanuja, Sri Madhvacharya, the Saiva Siddhanta teachers, the followers of Basava,—all these have assailed Sri Samkara's monistic doctrine, and sometimes their fanatical followers gave polemically prejudiced interpretation of what is termed as *mayavada*. But the followers of Sri Samkara preserved an unruffled equanimity, while pursuing an even path of study and exposition.

Sri K. R. Venkataraman, in this work, has made a thorough study of the life work of several Gurus who have flourished in Sringeri beginning with Sri Suresvaracharya, who, before He became a disciple under Adi Samkara, was an expert in *Purvamimamsa*. The author inclines to the view that Suresvaracharya was not the same person as Mandanamisra, and he gives a succinct account of His *Vartikas* or *Bashyas*. One of Suresvaracharya's most reputed work is his commentry entitled 'Manasollasa' on Samkara's 'Dakshina-murti Stotra'—a model of reasoning and logical analysis.

From the time of Sri Samkara, Sri Venkataraman recounts the story of His successors until in the 14th century we see the emergence during very troubled times, of Sri Vidyaranya and His brother. There is a very useful description of Sri Madhvacharya, a minister and *kulaguru* of Bukka and Harihara and of Vidyaranya's and Sayana's contribution to *Advaita*. There is also a very useful and full account of the scholars of the 14th century who worked in conjunction with the Sringeri Pitha.

It was in 1346, in the language of Sri Venkataraman, that a *Samsthanam* was born, Bukka and Harihara making grants of land to the matha. Gradually, the Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar was founded, and the rulers of that Empire gave their allegiance to the Sringeri gurus who were specially revered by the rulers, and through their aid several branch mathas were opened, including the Sivaganga and Avani mathas.

This book makes it abundantly clear that all the various dynasties and monarchies, that were founded in the 16th and 17th centuries, alike revered the Sringeri Pitha, and when the Karnataka rulers of Mysore established themselves, they, as well as the Maratha ruling houses, gave benefactions and added to the properties of the matha, which gradually came to be termed as *Samsthanam*. These resources were exclusively used to maintain learned men and devotees and sadhakas, temples and other charities.

The book contains an interesting account not only of the contacts of the Wadeyar dynasty of Mysore with the matha but also of the Peshwas and of Hyder and Tipu, both of whom sought the blessings of the Acharya.



The narrative makes a special mention of Sri Narasimha Bharati born in 1798, who was a highly evolved soul and rose superior to the needs of ordinary humanity subsisting as He did on a handful of boiled pulse during the latter part of His life. There is an interesting account of this Acharya's visit to Madurai and the intervention of Sri S. Subramanya Aiyar to get rid of the exclusive pretensions of the local Bhattars. After the ruler of Mysore was deposed in 1831 and the administration was taken over by the British Government, the Sringeri Acharya went on a long tour of pilgrimage, and each part of India rivalled with the other in doing honour to Him.

The last part of this work deals with the great Sri Sachchidananda Siva Abhinava Narasimha Bharati of revered memory who attained *videha mukti* in 1912 and who was the chosenguru of men like Dewan Sir Seshadri Aiyar and Sri A. Ramachandra Aiyar, the latter of whom, in conjunction with Sir Seshadri Aiyar and V. P. Madhava Rao carried out the Svamiji's desire to dedicate the shrine of Kalady in commemoration as being the birth place of Adi Samkaracharya.

Sri Sachchidananda Siva Abhinava Narasimha Bharati Svamigal was succeeded by Sri Chandrasekara Bharati Svamigal, a true *Atmajñani*, who very early transcended bodily trammels and bodily obstacles and so frequently attained *nirvikalpa samathi* that some opponents and even many well wishers thought He was unbalanced in mind. Those who came into close contact with Him, like myself, were aware of His transcendent spiritual eminence and capacity for abstraction. Many of us believe that He deliberately freed Himself from the fetters of the body, and some of us are aware that He predicted His passing away in the waters of the Tunga.

From the date of Adi Samkara onwards successive Gurus have carefully chosen and nominated their successors, and their choice has been marvellously justified. The present Svamiji has been endeavouring to capture the spirit of His predecessors and continue their tradition of religious discourse and of contacts with all grades and classes of disciples and seekers after truth.

The benefactions of rulers during many centuries have vested in the Sringeri Matha much landed and many other properties. The

religious celebrations in the numerous temples founded during the centuries are solemn and elaborate, and we have a loving account of all such details furnished in this book. The ultimate significance of Sringeri, however, lies in the fact that it was one of the prime foundations of Adi Samkaracharya, that the matha has been presided over by an unbroken catena of scholars and bhaktas, many of whom have been philosophers of distinction and authors of note, but all of whom during eleven centuries and more, have lived a life of exemplary piety and have sought by their lives and their teachings to illustrate that unity in diversity which is enunciated in the great *Mahavakyas* and expounded with miraculous clarity and logical precision by that exemplar of profound scholarship, lyrical fervour and fathomless devotion, the Adi Sankara.

Readers of this book should be grateful to the author for the meticulous care with which he has collated his authorities, the detachment and impartiality of his judgements and the devotion to Sri Samkara which alike inform his work.

Delisle.  
Ootacamund.  
26th February, 1959. }

C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR



## AUTHOR'S NOTES

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THE sources for this work are largely inscriptions, records in the archives (ancient and modern), and literary references. The Archaeological and Epigraphical reports published by the Governments of India, Mysore and Madras, and selections from the Mackenzie Collections have been pressed into service. The vast collections of *Kaditas*<sup>1</sup> in the matha and the much smaller one in the Madras Government Oriental Manuscript Library are a veritable mine of information which will surely reward patient research. They throw considerable light not only on the economics, but on the daily life and activities of a great monastic centre.

Two manuscripts in the archives of the matha, which can be dated in the beginning of the 15th century are of interest. They are *Sri Purushottama Bharati charita* and *Yatindra charita*. The first composed by Vishnu is in twelve chapters, the first three of which contain a brief account of the Acharyas from Sri Vidya Samkara to Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati II, and the rest deal with Sri Purushottama Bharati until his assumption of the pontificate at Hampi and taking over of the math administration in Sringeri. *Yatindra charita* is a phantasmagoria featuring Sri Narasimha Bharati's austere *tapasya*.

*Vidyaranyakalajnana*,<sup>2</sup> (flourit A. D. 1600) composed in the form of prophecies, a common feature in the historical accounts found in the Puranas, gives an account of the Vijayanagar emperors down to the reign of Venkata I.

- 
- 1 Records inscribed on long pieces of cloth covered with a composition of charcoal and gum. The records of this matha are obviously in Kannada.
  - 2 A manuscript of about 300 pages in the Mysore Oriental MSS. Library. It is in three parts or 'books'.

The *Guruvamsa*, a *Kavya* in 19 cantos, composed by Kasi Lakshmana Sastri, a contemporary of Sri Sacchidananda Bharati (1705-41), is an important source of information. The last historical incident that Lakshmana Sastri refers to is the southern campaign (1725-7) of Peshwa Baji Rao, and the work must, therefore, have been written about A. D. 1730.

Attached to the poem *Ramachandramahodaya* was found a poem, the author of which could not be identified. It gives an elaborate account of Sri Sacchidananda Bharati I in his pre-monastic life when he was called Narasimha and of his pontificate during the first half of the 17th century.

The *Sivatattvaratnakara*, a cyclopaedic work in Samskrit composed in S. 1631 (A. D. 1709) by Basava Nayak of the Ikkeri dynasty, and the *Keladinrpa Vijayam*, in Kannada, written about 1763, furnish information about the matha till the 18th century. The official *Guruparampara* verses, the *Gurusataka* composed by Sri Sacchidananda Bharati I (1622-33), the *Gadyavallari*, a samskrit manuscript from Bihar, and the list of Gurus in one of the volumes of the Mackenzie Collections, disclose remarkable unanimity in tracing apostolic succession, which again is corroborated by epigraphic and literary evidences. Prof. R. V. Otturkar of the *Itihasa Samshodhakmandal*, Poona, kindly sent me an interesting extract from the *Aitihasik Lekha Samgraha* published by V. V. Khare, which along with the *Peshwa Daftar*s in the Bombay archives, may give valuable information on the services of the Maratha Ruling Houses to the Sringeri Matha. Unfortunately I do not have the facility to undertake a close study of these sources in Marathi. For much of the material for Chapter Nine, I am indebted to the biographical sketches by Sri N. Srikantha Sastri, Sri B. V. Kamesvara Aiyar and Sri R. Krishnaswami Aiyar. I have acknowledged in the appropriate places other authors and works I have consulted.

In the course of the narration I have introduced some discussions, but I have contented myself with referring the reader to the relevant literature and setting forth the results of the discussions and my own conclusions.

This work could not have been published without the co-operation, in some form or other, of estimable friends, some of whom have forbidden any mention of their names in any form. I am bound to



respect their humility and sensitiveness and it will be invidious to mention a few other names. To all of them I render thanks—omnibus it may appear—but very sincere.

The *Foreword*, *Introduction* and *Messages* that appeared in the first edition are mostly reproduced in this edition with one addition ; omitting however, the Samskrit portion which included the blessings in a string of verses, sent by His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Bharati Krishna Tirtha of Puri Govardhan Pitha. Some of them today afford melancholy reading. Maharaja Rama Varma Parikshit of Cochin, Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Jagadguru Sri Bharati Krishna Tirtha, the revered Svamis Samkarananda and Sivananda and M. S. M. Sharma are no longer with us. They were towering personalities, peerless each in his own way. I pay homage to their illustrious memory. Their generous appreciation of this work has so overwhelmed me with feelings of gratitude that I do not find words adequate to express them.

In response to a persistent demand for a cheap and popular edition and at the insistance of friends this revised and enlarged edition is now issued at a very moderate price. Much against my inclination, I had to cut out all the passages in Samskrit and avoid the use of diacritical types.

I offer sincer thanks to the printers who have done a good job in spite of the shortness of time given to them. In spite of careful scrutiny of the proofs, errors have crept in, for which I crave the indulgence of the reader.

My approach to this work was in the spirit of a *yajna*, and for all the omissions and errors inevitable in a work by a humble person like myself, my consolation is the Divine assurance of the Lord : *Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat.*

3, Varadaraja Perumal Koil St.,  
Kotawal Chavadi,  
Tiruchirapalli-8, January 1967.)

K. R. VENKATARAMAN.

## ABBREVIATIONS

—o—

Annals BORI.	—	<i>Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.</i>
A. R. S. I. E. (or A. R. E.)	—	<i>Annual Reports on South Indian Epigraphy.</i>
E. C.	—	<i>Epigraphia Carnatica.</i>
E. I.	—	<i>Epigraphia Indica.</i>
G. V. K.	—	<i>Guruvamsakavya.</i>
I. A.	—	<i>Indian Antiquary.</i>
I. H. Q.	—	<i>Indian Historical Quarterly.</i>
JBBRAS	—	<i>Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.</i>
J. I. H.	—	<i>Journal of Indian History.</i>
J. O. R.	—	<i>Journal of Oriental Research.</i>
JRAS	—	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Great Britain).</i>
Mac. Mss.	—	<i>Mackenzie Manuscripts.</i>
MAR.	—	<i>Mysore Archaeological Reports.</i>
QJMS.	—	<i>Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society.</i>
Sg. C. P.	—	<i>Sringeri Copper Plates.</i>
Sg. R.	—	<i>Selections from the Records of Sringeri Mutt.</i>
S. I. T. Ins.	—	<i>South Indian Temple Inscriptions.</i>
STR:	—	<i>Sivatattvaratnakara.</i>
VKJ:	—	<i>Vidyaranyakalajnana.</i>

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-odOoo-

*Salutations*

*To Brahma and all other Seers  
and Promulgators of  
Brahma-Vidya*



*Dedicated*

*To Sri Samkarabhagavatpada and  
to all His Successors  
on the Spiritual Throne of Sringeri*





**Sri Samkaracharya**  
**(Bronze: Kalady)**





## CHAPTER ONE

### PEEP INTO THE DISTANT PAST

The forest hermitage is the cradle of spiritual thought and perfection in India. It was the home of sages, who with sense faculties introverted, realised the great truths of the Upanishadic teachings, which they passed on to their disciples. In the dim past of history one such hermitage was on the banks of the Tunga in the midst of the plateau of the Western Ghats, now known as the Mysore Malnad, where lived the sage Vibhandaka, whose resting place a holy *linga* now marks. His son was Rshyasrnga, whose innocence of character is charmingly portrayed by Valmiki. Brought up in utter seclusion, young Rshyasrnga had not set eyes on women. King Romapada, whose country suffered from a severe drought, was advised that rains would come if Rshyasrnga set foot on his territory. The king sent a bevy of the fairest damsels to entice the sage to his kingdom. The sage regarded his visitors as sages from a different clime, and charmed by their allurements, accompanied them to Romapada's kingdom. No sooner had the sage entered the kingdom, than the life giving rains came down in torrents and fertilised the land. The grateful king gave his daughter Santa in marriage to the young sage and sent them to Ayodhya, where Rshyasrnga officiated in the *putrakameshti* which king Dasaratha performed. Returning to his hermitage with his wife, Rshyasrnga spent his life in contemplation until his death. A curiously shaped *linga*, enshrined in the village of Kigga,<sup>1</sup> a few miles from Sringeri, is now worshipped as the symbol of the perfection which Rshyasrnga attained after years of deep meditation.

Sringeri or Rshyasrngagiri, to give its full name, nestles amidst the enclosing hills on the banks of the meandering Tunga which, rising from the Varaha hill, flows in a north-easterly direction near this town, then suddenly turns west and finally flows towards the east to meet her sister stream Bhadra. Its situation in the doab of the Tunga and Bhadra justifies the title *Tungabhadra-tira-vasi* which the Acharyas of the Saradapitha have adopted.

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NOTES:—<sup>1</sup> Kigga corrupted into Kigga had a temple and an agrahara of bhattacharyas in the seventh century (E. C. VI, Kp., 37-41.)

When Sri Samkara Bhagavatpada reached this place in the course of his tours, a strange phenomenon met his eyes. A serpent with its outspread hood was protecting a frog from the scorching rays of the sun. This place, Sri Samkara thought, was really a haven of peace dowered with a rare charm and beauty of nature. And he chose it to establish the first and perhaps the most renowned of his *pithas*, which has been and continues to be the seat of an unbroken line of apostolic succession.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE EARLY BRAHMAVIDYA SEERS

Knowledge emanates from Lord Isvara—particularly, the supreme knowledge of the Atman. In His aspect as Narayana, he promulgated Brahma Vidya or the knowledge of the Atman to Brahma, the Cosmic Creator. From Brahma, it passed on to a line of rishis, Vasishtha, Sakti, Parasara, Vyasa and Suka. Next follows the line of acharyas; the first of the line was Sri Gaudapada who was born near Kurukshetra<sup>1</sup> and lived for more than hundred years in contemplation in Badari. His earliest work is a *bhashya*<sup>2</sup> on Isvarakrishna's *Samkhya Karika*. He revitalised Vedantic thought by his assertion of *vivartavada*, though he did not completely discard the *parinamavada*.<sup>3</sup> His great work is *Mandukhyakarika*. *Bhasyas* on *Uttaragita*, *Nrsimhatapini* and *Durga Saptasati* and two works on *Sri Vidya*—*Sri Vidya Ratna Sutra* and *Subhagodaya* are his other works. His disciple was Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada at whose feet Sri Samkara sat. *Advaitanubhuti* also called *Avadutagita* is generally attributed to him.

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NOTES:—1. According to Aiyaswami Sastri ('2500 years of Buddhism' P. 355) Gaudapada lived about C. 725. Contra : R. D. Karmarkar C. 500, which is much too early.

2. This *bhashya* was translated into Chinese during the T'ang dynasty. This may help to investigate the date of Sri Gaudapada.

3. *Vivartavada* is the Advaitic theory that the universe of mind and matter is illusory and is superimposed by *Maya* on the one reality Brahman. According to *parinamavada* the world is a transformation of Brahman (Brahman as *becoming*). *Maya* is the indeterminate principle that brings about the illusory manifestation of the universe.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SRI SAMKARA: THE VYAKHYANA PITHA

The age which witnessed the advent of Sri Samkara Bhagavat-pada was one of spiritual and moral chaos. The cult of the Buddha had changed considerably from the pure and simple ethical teachings of the Master. Four distinctly marked schools, two of the Hinayana and two of the Mahayana sects had developed, and though they could, in some form or other, be traced to the teachings of the *Upanishads*, they denied the authority of the Vedas. Jainism also denied the authority of the Vedas and said nothing about the First Cause. Not all the prevalent *darsanas* admitted the infallibility of the Vedas, and some found no need for an Isvara. Many unwholesome excrescences, such as the vows (*mahavratas*) of the Saivas and the *vamacara* of the Saktas, Ganapatyas, Sauras and Bhagavatas, called for reform. What the times needed was an integration of all thought so as to arrest the waning of the eternal principles of *dharma*, a message that would elevate life from its degrading dependence on sensory perceptions and the enjoyments they might bring. For this task the Essence (*Aisvarya*) of the *Jnana* aspect (the aspect of Sri Dakshinamurti) of the Lord manifested on earth in the person of Sri Samkara.

#### *Date of Sri Samkara*

Sri Samkara's date has baffled scholars. Different dates ranging from 509 B.C. to the close of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century A.D. have been suggested. Padmapada says that Sri Samkara assailed the tenets of the Mahayana schools. Sri Samkara refuted the tenets of the Pasupata schools, and his writings contain quotations from the *Puranas* that are known to be later than the fourth century. He is said to have read the *Sutasamhita*, one of the latest additions to Puranic literature. These considerations rule out the fourth century A.D. suggested by R. G. Bhandarkar. Nor is Telang's<sup>1</sup> suggestion of the latter half of the sixth century acceptable. Sri Suresvara refers to a verse of Dharmakirti quoted by the

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*Notes:—* 1 I. A. XIII, pp. 95 ff.



Acharya;<sup>2</sup> and this Buddhist writer belongs to the seventh century. In the *Brahmasutrabhasya*, Sri Samkara quotes a line from Kamala-sila's commentary on the *Tattvasamgraha* of Santaraksita, which he refutes, even as he does the teachings of Dinnaga and other Vijñānavādins, of the Sautrantika school and all other Sunyavadins. It is accepted that Samkara was much later than Bhartṛhari (seventh century) who is referred to by I-T'sing. It is believed that the *Saundaryalahari* contains a reference to Saint Sambandar, described as *Dravida sisu* <sup>3</sup>

If Purnavarman, Rajavarman and Balavarman mentioned in the *bhashya* are historical persons, it is difficult to assign to this work any date earlier than the eighth century. T. R. Chinthamani's<sup>4</sup> date A. D. 655-689 does not satisfy these considerations. *Guruvamsa-kavya*<sup>5</sup> speaks of a Kerala chief Rajasekhara, who wrote three dramas under the pseudonym *Saktibhadra* which he read out to Sri Samkara. Rajasekhara is a surname, probably of a Kulasekhara of the eighth-ninth century, who is reputed to have composed three dramas. A

2 II. 2. 28.

3 In *Upadesasahasrtivarttika*, Suresvara quotes a sloka of Dharmakīrti (C. A. D. 639).

See *J. H. Q.* VI, p. 169 (Note by Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya). Santarakṣita is said to have lived in the 8th century.

Lakṣmīdhara (13th century) was perhaps the first to point this out. He has absolutely no doubt that *Saundaryalahari* was composed by Samkara. Some believe that the Pallava general Paranjoti (7th century) canonized as Śiruttondar is referred to in the expression *sutadrohi* in Samkara's *Sivabhujanga stotra*.

See *J. R. A. S.* 1916, pp. 152 ff. for this and some other points made above.

4 *J. O. R.* III.

5 Canto II, v 9 and vv. 67, 68.

Also M. M. Kuppaswami Sastri: *Introduction to Ascharyachudamani* p. 8 (Balamanorama Press, Madras-4.) and K. R. Venkataraman: *Kalady* p. 21. Sri Vani Vilas Press, Tiruchirapalli-6).

Kerala tradition connects the year of the commencement of the Kollam Era (A. D. 825) with a prominent incident in Sri Samkara's life; some assert that it commenced five years after Sri Samkara had left this world. Rice<sup>6</sup> suggests A.D. 745-769, while J. F. Fleet, W. Logan, D. R. Bhandarkar, Maxmuller, A. A. Macdonald, Buhler and M. Barth assign A.D. 788-820-1.<sup>7</sup> In two chronograms<sup>8</sup> that occur in a string of verses, Pathak finds support for fixing A. D. 788-820 as the period of Sri Samkara's life which is now commonly accepted. The astronomical details<sup>9</sup> given in Sri Samkara's horoscope would suggest A.D. 805, in which year alone in the eighth-ninth century, the given combination of planets is possible. An inscription from Cambodge<sup>10</sup> belonging to the reign of Jayavarman II (A.D. 878-887) mentions the royal guru Sivasoma 'who had learned all the *sastras* from Bhagavat Samkara.' Taking into consideration all these factors the period 788-820 seems to be the most acceptable.

### *His Life and Work*

There are several *Samkara vijayas*, and some of them are unreliable, having been composed to support partisan interests.

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6 *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 300.

7 *I. A.* IX, pp. 174-5; XLI, p. 200.

8 *I. A.* XI, p. 175; V. Nagamaiya: *Travancore State Manual* Vol. II, ch. VIII, p. 99; P. P. Menon: *History of Kerala*, Vol. III, p. 620; Logan: *Malabar Manual*, Vol. I, pp. 155 *et seq* and 187 *et seq*.

See also *J. B. B. R. A. S.* XVIII, p. 88.

9 *Guruvamsakavya*, canto II, v. 59; Also *Madhaviya Samkaradigvijaya*: canto II, v. 71. [Sun in Aries; Moon and Jupiter in Cancer; Saturn in Libra; and Mars in Capricorn. Cancer is the lagna (or ascendent). Star—Arudra. *Sukla* 5].

It may be recalled that there is no reference to Sri Samkara or Advaita in the *Devaram* and *Nalayira-prabandam*. The last of the great Alvars, Tirumangai, lived in the eighth century. Only the Vaishnava Acharyas from Nadamuni refer to Advaita vada which they try to refute.

10 G. Coedes: *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, p. 40.



*Madhaviya Samkara vijaya* is perhaps the most widely read. It is not possible to collect together in a few lines all the traditional accounts relating to Sri Samkara's life and appraise them critically. The chief incidents of his life may be outlined here.

Sri Samkara was born of Sivaguru and Aryamba at Kalady in North Travancore. Sivaguru was a Nambutiri Brahman of the Kaippilli illom, while Aryamba came from the Melapalur illom. Sri Samkara lost his father in his third year. He had his *upanayanam* in his fifth year, and in a few years completed his Vedic studies and attained mastery of several sastras. After a good deal of persuasion, he got his mother's permission to enter the *sanyasa asrama*. Leaving home he went to the banks of the Narmada where Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada accepted him as his disciple and imparted to him the mystic significance of the *Vedanta Mahavakyas*. He then went to Varanasi and composed his bhashyas on Vyasa's *Brahma Sutra*, the principal *Upanishads* and the *Gita*, the three collectively known as *prasthanatraya*. He had then a vision of Vyasa who expressed his complete acceptance of Sri Samkara's arguments and conclusions. Here at Varanasi, Sanandana, who is better known as Padmapada, became Sai Samkara's disciple.

Sri Samkara then went to Kumarila Bhatta, but no discussion with him was possible as he was undergoing the penance of self-immolation. He blessed Kumarila and then met Mandana Misra Visvarupa whom he converted to his view. Visvarupa took up *sanyasa* under the name of Sri Suresvaracharya and became one of the chief disciples of the Master. This was Sri Samkara's great victory over the exponents of Karma Mimamsa. Then came other disciples, prominent among whom were Sri Hastamalaka and Sri Totaka.

Sri Samkara and his disciples travelled all over the land, refuting false doctrines and purifying objectionable practices in the name of religion. He established mathas in four places—in Sringeri in the south, in Badari in the north, in Dvaraka in the west and in Puri or Jagannatha in the east. These places he chose for the beauty of their natural environments amidst snow-clad mountains, forests and rivers, or on the shores of the ocean, places where heaven and earth meet and transport man's thoughts to sublime heights. He placed

Sri Suresvaracharya at the head of the matha in Sringeri, Sri Padmapada in Dvaraka, Sri Totaka in Badari and Sri Hastamalaka in Puri. The establishment of these mathas indicates Sri Samkara's realisation of the physical and spiritual unity of India, and he wrote in Samskrit, the lingua franca of cultured India, which alone could appeal to all the intellectuals all over the land.

After a pretty long stay in Sringeri, he hastened to the side of his dying mother in his ancestral home Kalady, and sped her soul to the 'immortal realms of light' to the strains of mellifluous hymns in praise of Siva and Vishnu. Undeterred by the opposition of his pharisaical kins men, he cremated his mother's body on the river bank behind the house, and the spot has since become haloed as a place of pilgrimage.

He visited all the sacred shrines of the land, round which have gathered all the cultural traditions of the people, purified the forms of worship, established the Sri Chakra in many of them, and got them renovated. The installation of a Sri Cakra in Kamakshi's temple in Kanchi, of Nara Narayana in Badari and Guhyesvari in Nepal are some of the outstanding instances.

This 'best of peripatetic teachers' (*Paramahansa-parivrajacharya*) crowned his triumphal tours by vanquishing the great scholars of Kashmir, and ascended the *sarvajnapitha*, as the symbol of recognition by the world of scholarship of his undisputed mastery over all the then known branches of learning.

During his last visit to Nepal, he had a vision of Sri Dattatareya, and from there he went to Kedarnath near which place at the age of thirty-two he is said to have disappeared from mortal ken. A spot not far from the shrine of Kedarnath is the place of the disappearance of the Master.

The message that is contained in the elaborate discussions in the bhashyas of Sri Samkara is often succinctly expressed in a century of verses, in ten verses, in one verse or even half a verse. Sri Samkara has reconciled (*samanvaya*) the seemingly contradictory conclusions of the *Upanishads*, and in the integrated view that he has presented, the eternal, impersonal, Consciousness-Absolute is the Brahman, the One without a second, without any of the three kinds of differences. By His power which is inscrutable (*anirvachaniya*) and



called Maya or Avidya, He appears as the universe conditioned by time and space, ever changing and subject to causality. The Jiva is not different from the Absolute Brahman, but due to *upadhis*, appears to be different and subject to limitations. The *upadhis* limit comprehension, and are unreal. Once nescience goes, the conditioning factors—the *upadhis*—vanish, and the Jiva is seen as one with the Brahman as taught in the *Mahavakyas* of the *Upanishads*. The knowledge of this oneness is *moksha* or liberation; it is the supreme *jnana*. *Karma* and *bhakti* help in the attainment of *janana*, and, by themselves, cannot lead to final illumination; they must not, however, be neglected. Brahman alone is Absolute Truth (*paramarthika*); the knowledge of the objective universe—erroneous from the highest standpoint—is a relative kind of truth (*vyavaharika*).

It is not all that can realise the Formless Absolute. To them Sri Samkara says that the Supreme is both formless and with form; formless when viewed in itself and not in relation to the universe, hence beyond the senses, beyond speech and mind; and with form when thought of in relation to the world as its creator, sustainer and indweller. Out of His own volition, and projecting His power of Maya, Brahman becomes Isvara, and, to bless the devotees, manifests Himself in several divine forms in which the upasaka contemplates Him. Sri Samkara purified the rituals of worship of Siva, Devi, Vishnu, Surya, Ganapati and Kumara, and composed devotional hymns on each of these divine forms to help the devotees. These divine forms are not different; they are the manifestations of the Supreme, and devotion to any of them accompanied with complete self-surrender will bring diving grace, which will lead the sadhaka to *jnana* and liberation. He is not totally opposed to the Agamas or Tantras, and accepts those that do not contradict the Vedas and do not prescribe impure forms of worship. Because of his acceptance of the worship of the six divine forms, then in vogue, he is known as the *Shanmatasthapaka*.

In Sri Vidya are integrated *jnana*, *bhakti*, *yoga* and *karma*, and this mode of worshipping the Devi constitutes the practical *sadhana* of Advaita. It is but another form of Brahma Vidya, and because of its excellence, Sri Samkara introduced in the mathas the external worship of Sri Chakra together with the meditation on the mystic truth that it symbolises.

Karma is not an end in itself and should be done in a spirit of dedication to Isvara and detachment without expectation of reward.

Every one of the several theistic schools which developed in the Post-Samkara age, bears the influence of Sri Samkara's teachings in one form or other. In Him, we have the unique synthesis of the man of action and the man of devotion, of the mystic and the poet, of the saint and the organiser. His doctrine alone 'can accommodate all, placing each in its proper place in the panorama of world thought, leading all to the ultimate reality of oneness. It is this spirit of accommodation and synthesis which places the Vedanta on a glorious pedestal and claims for it the status of the world philosophy of the future.'<sup>11</sup>

Sri Samkara's works comprise the *bhashyas* on the ten principal *Upanishads* and the *Svetasvatara* and *Nrsimha-tapini Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras*; the commentaries on *Hastamalakiyam*, *Sanatsujatiyam*, *Visnusahasranama* and *Lalita Trisati prakaranas* or minor philosophical works and *stotras*. *Prapanchasara*, a work on Mantrasastra, is also attributed to him. All the works included in the Memorial Edition published by the Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, may be taken as Sri Samkara's.<sup>12</sup> For sweetness and elegance of diction, clarity and invincibility of reasoning and sublimity of thought, Sri Samkara's writings can hardly be rivalled, much less surpassed.

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11 D. C. Bhattacharya : *Post Samkara Advaita in Cultural Heritage of India* (Revised edition), Vol. III, p. 280.

12 The selection of the works included in these volumes was approved by Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Nrsimha Bharati Svami. He supplied the correct readings wherever there were doubts. This collection, which represents one of the oldest traditional recensions, that of the Sringeri Sarada pitha, can safely be considered as authoritative.

In the *pitha* in Sringeri, Sri Samkara installed Sarada, who is of the form of Brahma Vidya, over a Sri Chakra engraved on a rock on the left bank of the Tunga. He also gave to Sri Suresvaracharya, who was placed in charge of the pitha, a sphatika or crystal *linga* of Chandramaulisvara, and murti (idol) of Ganapati carved out of a small block of crystal with a patch of ruby in the middle (*Ratnagarbha*). The table in the appendix gives particulars of the four mathas that Sri Samkara established in the cardinal points of the country.





# THE FOUR AMNAYA MATHAS

	West : Dvaraka Kalika matha <sup>1</sup>	North : Badari- kasrama Jyotir matha	East : Jagan- natha Govardhana matha	South : Sringeri (Asrama of Rshyasnga, Ramakshetra or Rames- varam) Sarada matha
DIVINITIES :	Siddhesvara Sakti-Bhadra Kali	Narayana Sakti-Purnagiri	Jagannatha (Purusot- tama, Sakti - Vrsala Vimala)	Malahanikara linga ; Varaha Sakti - Sarada <sup>2</sup>
TIRTHA :	River Gomati	River Alakananda	Mahodadhi (Bay of Bengai)	The Tungabadhra
ACHARYA :	Sri Padmapada	Sri Totaka	Sri Hastamalaka	Sri Suresvara
VEDA :	Sama	Atharvana,	Rg.	Yajur
SAMPRADAYA :	Kitavala	Nandavala	Bhogavala	Bhurivala
MAHAVAKYA .	Tattvamasi	Ayamatma Brahma	Prajananam Brahma	Aham Brahmasmi
TITLES :	Tirtha, Asrama	Giri, Parvata, Sagara	Aranya, Vana	All the titles, particularly, Sarasvati, Puri, Bharati, Aranya Tirtha, Giri, Asrama

1. Also called Saradamatha in some Amnaya recensions.

2. According to the *Amnaya Upanisad*, p. 49 (*Unpublished Upanisads*, Adyar Library Publication), the Sakti of the Sringeri pitha is Kamaksi.



Sri Sarada (Sringeri)





## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE EARLY CENTURIES OF THE VYAKHYANA PITHA

The period under investigation in this chapter covers about five centuries—ninth to thirteenth. During this period, except in a few centres mostly in the coastal areas, Buddhism was on the wane. Jainism launched its attacks from its numerous monastic centres, and was often supported by royal patronage. In the eleventh century, Sri Ramanuja established centres in Melkote, Kanchi and Srirangam. In the thirteenth century Sri Anandatirtha or Madhva-charya, the great exponent of Pluralism in opposition to Sri Samkara's teaching, started another development in Vaishnavism and opened monastic centres in the Kannada country. In the Tamil country, Meykandar of the early thirteenth century formulated the Agamic philosophy of Saivasiddhanta which later developed several schools, some built up against the background of Advaitic thought. In the same century Virasaivism or the Lingayat cult developed under the leadership of Sri Ekantada Ramayya and Sri Basava, who to their doctrine of Pluralism, added a denial of Vedic authority. This school propagated its tenets from a network of monasteries in the Kannada country. The Aradhya Saivas of the Andhra desa, followers of Sri Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya, accepted the Vedas and the Smarta social usages, but made common cause with Lingayats. In extolling bhakti the followers of Sri Samkara were not opposed to these schools, but the clash came when the monism of Sri Samkara was sought to be assailed as *mayavada*,—an expression often used in derision,—either out of ignorance or wilful perversion of Sri Samkara's teaching. The age, therefore, saw on the Sarada pitha, Acharyas, who to their great *tapasya*, added deep erudition and a thorough knowledge of all contemporary systems of religion, an extraordinary dialectic skill and deep devotion to all forms of God so as to instil in devotees an abiding faith in the oneness of Godhead and non-differentiation between Vishnu and Siva.

*Paripassu* from the sixth century onward, there had been a movement to spread Samskrit learning with emphasis on the study of the Vedas and their angas. In course of time the centres of Vedic learning added to the curriculum Dharma Sastras and Puranas,

and paid particular attention to Tarka, Nyaya, Vyakarana and Mimamsa of both the Prabhakara and Bhatta schools, with perhaps greater emphasis on the former. Inscriptions of this period refer to several of these centres of learning, prominent among which were the Brahmapuri at Belgamve, the Vidyarthisingha at Salatgi. the Ghatikas of Kanchi, Bahur etc., and the Salais in Keraladesa. In Sringeri and in the villages in close proximity to it flourished teachers who imparted instruction in the Vedas, and a record<sup>1</sup> dated in the second year of the reign of the Ganga king Konkanivaram or Avinita registers the grant of two villages in the Marugare vishaya to two Brahmana scholars of the Kasyapa gotra, followers of the Yajur veda (*Taittiriya charana*) and adepts in exposition (*pravachanakalpa*). Another<sup>2</sup> in the first year of the Ganga king Rachamalla is a royal grant of a village in the same vishaya to Nagadeva Bhatta of the Bharadvaja gotra. (Rigvedaparaga)

## 2\* SRI SURESVARACHARYA

(reigned till C. 834)

Sri Samkara's choice of Sri Suresvaracharya for the Sarada pitha at Sringeri has significance. A profound Vedic scholar and expert in Purva Mimamsa in his *purvasrama*, Sri Suresvaracharya, who, after becoming Sri Samkara's disciple, acquired wonderful mastery of the bhashyas of the Master, was the fittest person to take charge of the matha of the southern region, where he could effectively lay the crowning edifice of Brahma Mimamsa over a strong foundation of Nyaya and Purva Mimamsa. It has been aptly said that Sri Samkara gave Visvarupa, the name of Suresvaracharya after Brhaspati, the acharya of Indra (Suresvara).

Sri Suresvaracharya's independent work is the *Naishkarmyasiddhi*, a succinct presentation of the fundamental teachings of Sri Samkara. He wrote the vartikas (elucidation) of the Master's bhashyas on the *Bhadaranya* and *Taittiriya Upanisads*, and is hence known as the

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\* These numbers represent the order of apostolic succession.

1 Sg. C. P. of Konkanivarman. The old territorial division of Marugarevishaya included Sringeri.

2 M. A. R. 1942 No. 75 (S. 741 - A. D. 819).

*Vartikakara*. His other works include a commentary on Sri Samkara's *Dakshinamurti stotra*, called *Manasollasa* and another on *Panchi-karanam*.

According to the *Guruvamsakavya*,<sup>3</sup> Mandana Misra, author of *Brahmasiddhi*, and Visvarupa, who became Sri Suresvaracharya, were two different persons. Directed by Sri Kumarila Bhatta, Sri Samkara was going to Magadha to meet Visvarupa, and on the way Mandana Misra, who had studied Jaiminiya bhashya, approached him and, after some discussion, begged to be blessed with the knowledge that would confer liberation. Sri Samkara blessed him and then went to Visvarupa, vanquished him and his wife Ubhaya Bharati in a polemical discussion, and made him his disciple. This account of *Guruvamsakavya* is supported by modern scholars of the eminence of Hiriyanna,<sup>4</sup> Kuppusvami Sastri,<sup>5</sup> and Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharya.<sup>6</sup>

P. P. S. Sastri, in his *Preface* to Kuppusvami Sastri's critical edition of the *Brahmasiddhi*, defends the common view identifying Mandana with Sri Suresvaracharya. He suggests that Mandana's *Brahmasiddhi* represents the view of the pre-Samkara school, largely of an Advaita-cum-Mimamsa type, but later becoming a sanyasin undergoing a conversion, he must have changed some of his views. Kuppusvami Sastri's position is clear and conclusive. He pertinently points out that neither in the colophon of the *Brahmasiddhi*, nor in the works of other writers is Mandana mentioned as a disciple of Sri Samkara or again as identical with Sri Suresvaracharya (Visvarupa), the renowned Vartikakara, and that from Vidyaranya to Madhusudana Sarasvati and later scholars, writers have always made

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3 G. V. K. II v. 59 com., vv. 47-50 refer to Mandana Misra, and vv. 50-59 to Visvarupa.

4 *Suresvara and Mandana Misra*, J. R. A. S. 1923 (April) and 1924 (January).

5 *Introduction* (Section II) to *Brahmasiddhi* (Madras 1937).

6 *Post-Samkara Advaita: Cultural Heritage of India* (Revised) III, pp. 255-7. Also K. A. Nilakanta Sastri: *History of South India*, (second edition) pp. 343-4.



a distinction between Mandana and Sri Suresvara. Even the scurrilous Madhva work, *Manimanjari*, makes this distinction. Mandana must have written his *Brahmasiddhi* after seeing Sri Samkara's *Brahmasutra bhasya*, and Sri Suresvaracharya must have written the *Naishkarmya Siddhi* mainly as an effective rejoinder to the numerous points on which Mandana differs from Sri Samkara.<sup>7</sup>

P. P. S. Sastri adds the following note in his *Preface*. When Sri Narasimha Bharati (Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati Svami of Sringeri—1857-1912) was asked regarding the apparent challenge to 'existing tradition' which identifies Mandana Misra with Sri Suresvara, 'he explained graciously that in ancient days *Mandana* was merely an honorific title and that there was no contradiction as the references under question were to two independent personalities who were both known by the name of *Mandana*, one who was a *grhastha*, and had the benefit of Samkara's advice and lived and died as a *grhastha*, and the other, the famous *grhastha* Visvarupa, who later on became a sanyasin and died as Suresvara.' This is the last word on the controversy. We shall remember the Vartikakara not as Mandana Misra but as Mandana (exalted) Visvarupa Suresvaracharya.

### 3. SRI NITYABODHAGHANA ACHARYA

( C. 834 - 848 )

Sri Suresvara's successor was Sri Nityabodhaghana.

He is sometimes identified with Sarvajnatman, the author of the *Samshepa Sarirakam*; this is based on the mistaken identification of Sarvajnatman's guru Devesvara with Sri Suresvara and Manukula Aditya, in whose reign he completed his work, with Aditya Chola I (870-901). T. R. Chintamani and other<sup>8</sup> have since pointed out

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7 Both Kuppusvami Sastri and Bhattacharya have listed the differences in the views of Mandana expressed in the *Brahmasiddhi* and those of Sri Samkara and Sri Suresvaracharya.

8 K. A. N. Sastri: *A History of India*, p. 340. He says: 'He flourished in Travancore at the end of the tenth century.'

that Manukula Aditya was a ruler of South Travancore, and Devesvara was a disciple of Devananda, who was a disciple of Sresthananda.

The invocatory verse addressed to this Acharya by his disciple and successor Sri Jnanaghana sums up his work and that of his successors: 'Resting like a cloud on the lofty summit of self-realisation, his dialectics dispel all opposition even as a lion's roar drives away elephants. His teaching, like the life-giving showers, fertilise the minds of his worthy disciples.'<sup>9</sup>

Sri Bodaghana and his successors shed 'the lustre of their exalted mood,'<sup>10</sup> instilling in their disciples true bhakti by conducting the daily worship of Sri Sarada and Sri Chandramaulisvara and by their precepts leading them to the path of righteousness.'<sup>11</sup>

#### 4. SRI JNANAGHANA ACHARYA

(C. 848 - 910)

Sri Jnanaghana was the author of *Tattvasuddhi*. Scholars<sup>12</sup> rightly place him in the second half of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth century.

##### *Two Schools of Samkara Vedanta.*

Vachaspati Misra,<sup>13</sup> who wrote the *Bhamati*, a sub-commentary on Sri Samkara's *Sutrabhasya*, and Prakasatman, the author of *Panchapadika vivarana*, are associated with the two prasthanas or schools of interpretation. Several points that Sri Jnanaghana makes in the *Tattvasuddhi* lend support to Prakasatman's *Vivarana*. *Tattvasuddhi*, which Appayya Diksita holds in high esteem, is probably a record of the Acharya's exposition to his disciples.

9 *Tattvasuddhi*: Introductory verse.

10 G. V. K. IV v. 7.

11 *Ibid.* v. 8.

12 Cf. S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri: Introduction to *Tattvasuddhi*; *New Indian Antiquary* III, pp. 62-67.

13 Vachaspati Misra flourished in the ninth century. He says definitely that he composed *Nyayasuchinibandha* in V. S. 898 (A. D. 842). *Bhamati* is a later work. Prakasatman is a later writer.

The Janardana temple in Sringeri must have been consecrated by Sri Jnanaghana.<sup>14</sup>

### 5. SRI JNANOTTAMA SIVA ACHARYA (C. 910 - 954)

Sri Jnanottama Siva succeeded Sri Jnanaghana.<sup>15</sup> The colophon at the end of the third *pariccheda* of *Chitsukhi* refers to him as *Gaudes-varacharya Paramahamsaparivrajacharya Jnanottama pujiyapada*,<sup>16</sup> and it is, therefore, obvious that he was a Gauda settled in the south.<sup>17</sup> He is addressed as Jagadguru<sup>18</sup> ('guru of the three worlds')

14 G. V. K., IV, v. 8 says that for a long time he worshipped Pinakin and Janardana. This is the earliest reference to Janardana in Sringeri.

15 Colophon to *Vidya Sri*.

16 Janaottama Siva Acharya of Sringeri Sarada pitha is different from Mahopadhyaya Jnanottama Misra, the commentator of *Naishkarmyasiddhi* and *Ishtasiddhi*. The latter, a *grhasta*, calls himself a native of Mangalam, an agrahara on the Coleroon in the Chola country. He was also a Gauda. V. Raghavan has conclusively shown that the *grhasta* Jnanottama has, in his commentary on *Ishtasiddhi*, drawn freely upon the commentaries written by Anandanubhava and Anubhutiavarupa (*Annals B. O. R. I. XXIII Silver Jubilee No. p. 360*) and 'is also indebted to Chitsukha.' He is, therefore, a much later writer who wrote probably towards the close of the 12th century. His name is a very uncommon one for a *grahastha*, and he says that he was so called after his father's guru (*piturguru*). It is quite probable that his 'father's guru' was Acharya Jnanottama, Jagadguru of Sringeri.

17 From about the 10th century, if not earlier, Brahmans from Gauda, Madhyadesa, Kashmir and Western India settled in the south. Raja Raja I and Rajendra I Chola gave them lands. Some of them, who were Saiva acharyas and followers of the Upanishadic Vedanta, were *Svamidevar* or royal priests in the courts of the Cholas and Pandyas.

18 *Tatparyadyotini*.



in a famous work by one of his disciples. His work *Vidyasri* is a sub-commentary on the *Brahmasutra bhasya*.

### *His Disciples*

One of his disciples was Vijnanatman or Vijnanasrama, the author of *Tatparyadyotini*<sup>19</sup> and a vrtti on *Narayanopanishad*, which is a section of *Taittiriya Upanishad*.

Another was Chitsukha, a prolific writer, probably hailing from Simhachalam. *Tattvapradipika*, also called *Chitsukhi*, is his independent work on Advaita. He follows the khandana form of writing, which consists in refuting the categories of the rival schools to establish the truth of his. The Nyaya and Vaisesika categories come in largely for refutation. In his *Bhavadyotanika* or *Vivaranatatparyadipika*, he presents a lucid commentary on Prakasatman's *vivarana*. *Brahmasutra bhashyatika* or *Bhavaprakasika* is based on *Bhamati* and *Vivarana*. *Adhikaranamanjari* gives a summary and index of the *adhikaranas* of the *Brhamasutra* while *Adhikaranasangati* explains the inter-relation between the *adhikaranas*. A commentary on the *Brahmasiddhi* of Mandana Misra, a tika on *Nuishkarmyasiddhi* of Sri Suresvaracharya, *Pramanamalatika* and *Vedantasiddhantakarikamanjari* are some of his other works. Sukhaprakasa, a disciple<sup>20</sup> of Chitsukha, wrote the *Adhikaranaratnamala*, a metrical summary of the *adhikaranas* of the *Brahmasutra*. Amalananda (also called Vyasasrami?) adores Sukhaprakasa as his *vidyaguru*<sup>21</sup>. A native of *Tryambaka* (Nasik), he was a contemporary of the Yadava kings Krshna and Mahadeva (1246-71). His masterpiece is the *Kalpataru*, a commentary on the *Bhamati*. His *Sastradarpanam* explains each of the *adhikaranas* according to Sri Samkara's *Sutrashashya*.

Chitsukha pays homage to Sri Jnanottama as the effulgence that was Dakshinamurti, Vyasa and Samkara; nothing more apt than this can be said of this great Acharya.

19 See colophon of this work which says that Vijnanatman was a disciple of Sri Jnanottama.

20 See introductory verse in *Adhikaranaratnamala*.

21 In the *Kalpataru*.

6. *SRI JNANAGIRI*  
(c. 954-1038)
7. *SRI SIMHAGIRI*  
(c. 1038-1098)
8. *SRI ISVARA TIRTHA*  
(c. 1098-1146)
9. *SRI NRSIMHA TIRTHA*  
(c. 1146-1229)

Sri Jnanottama's successor was Sri Jnanagiri. Then reigned Sri Simhagiri, after whom an agrahara near Sringeri has been named. The next two Acharyas were Sri Isvaratirtha and Sri Nrsimhatirtha. All of them were great polemics.

#### *Expansion of Vedantic Thought*

Independent works on Advaita, elucidations of Sri Samkara's bhashyas and Sri Suresvaracharya's vartikas, glosses representing both the *Bhamati* and the *Vivarana* schools, polemical works and works of the class entitled *siddhi*, that sum up the vast literature on Advaita during this period, can be said to have set the norm for future writers. The Saradapitha was the fountain head of all this expansion of Vedantic knowledge, in the pursuit of which were engaged sages and scholars from all parts of the land—Karnataka, Chola, Andhra, Maharashtra and Gaudadesa. It was not long before other *vidyasthanas* were influenced, and Vedanta was added to the curriculum of studies. In the midst of the Saiva monasteries in Belgamve in Karnata, an Advaita matha rose to some prominence in the eleventh century.<sup>22</sup> In the colleges in Ennayiram (Raja Raja Chaturvedimangalam) and Tribhuvani, both in the Chola country, Vedanta was made a subject of study.<sup>23</sup> In Tiruvidaikali,<sup>24</sup> also in Chola desa, an endowment was made for the free feeding of students of Vedanta from Kerala. Every matha of influence had a residential college and shrine attached to it, and Vedanta was taught in it. In Kerala alone, according to tradition, there were eighteen mathas of this description including those in Trichur.

22 During the reign of Somesvara II (11th century).

23 A. R. S. I. E. 333 of 17 and 176 of 19 (11th century).

24 A. R. S. I. E. 276 of 25.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE GREAT SEERS : A SAMSTHANAM IS BORN

#### 10. SRI VIDYASAMKARA TIRTHA

(1229—1333)

'Verily Vidyatirtha, the Lord of ascetics, excels the sun ; the latter dispels the darkness around us only by day, while the former dispels the darkness both within and without, both by day and night.' This tribute paid by Emperor Harihara II of Vijayanagar is a measure of the greatness of Sri Vidyasamkara, also called Vidyatirtha. Always absorbed in the bliss of self-realisation, he spent many years in Simhagiri in the company of numerous disciples, who by his grace became adepts in mantra, tantra, yoga and meditation. Harihara and Bukka visited him and proceeded with him to Sringeri. To him came a Brahmana lad, young in years but advanced in the practice of the virtues of a mumukshu, from Ekasilanagaram (Warangal). Finding him worthy, the Acharya admitted him into the order of *sanyasa* (1328) under the name of Sri Bharatikrshnatirtha, (Bharatitirtha for short). Three years later (1331) came Sri Bharatitirtha's elder brother, who also received *sanyasa* under the name of Sri Vidyaranya. Sri Bharatitirtha stayed with the master, while Sri Vidyaranya went on long tours, and during his stay in Hampi, he helped the brothers Harihara and Bukka to found the empire of Vijayanagar.

The Acharya also toured over South India. A debate at Trivandrum between him and Sri Madhva (1198 to 1275) is said to have ended in the discomfiture of the latter.

In Simhagiri there is still preserved a strange sculpture, and on its four faces are figures representing respectively Sri Vidyatirtha flanked by his two chief disciples-Sri Bharatitirtha and Sri Vidyaranya, Brahma, Visnu and Mahesvara. Above them is a figure of Lakshmi Narasimha and on top is a Siva linga. When the Acharya got this strange multiple image, called Chaturmurti Vidyasvara, made, he

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1 See his grants.



explained to Sri Bharatitirtha that his body would assume a shape similar to that after twelve years of yoga<sup>2</sup> in an underground tryst. A chamber was excavated on the northern bank of the Tunga, and while the Acharya sat there in yoga, it was closed over him. Three years elapsed. When the new pontiff was temporarily away from Sringeri, the curiosity of the attendants got the better of their duty to their guru, and they opened the chamber. The sage's body had completely disappeared, and they saw only the form of the linga on the top of the model in Simhagiri. Sri Bharatitirtha, who was completely upset by this act of indiscretion on the part of the attendants, received a cheering message in his dream, and set up a linga over the spot, round which within the next few years, he constructed a magnificent temple. He instituted regular worship both in this temple and for the model statue, Chaturmurti Vidyeshvara, in Simhagiri. It is believed that the effulgence of the sage continues to manifest itself shedding subtle spiritual influence about the place.<sup>3</sup> To this day the seal of the matha bears the name of Sri Vidyasamkara, and not that of the presiding pontiff.

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- 2 By the practice of Kechari mudra, taking the tongue backwards beyond the uvula, and stopping the respiratory process, the adept remains in this state as long as he wills. Charged with a new vitality the body cells are capable of being transmuted into any form or to disappear altogether, while the adept's range of supra-perception increases, and he can exert his subtle influence upon the destiny of others. Hatha yogis get into this state to prolong their bodily existence. Paul Brunton, in his two books *A Search in Secret India* and *A Search in Secret Egypt* introduces us to adepts who have lived for hundreds of years. But a jnani of the eminence of Sri Vidyatirtha, while in this state, manifests for all times the power of Atmic realisation and transmutes it to others through a concrete symbol into which he, by predetermination, changes his body.

- 3 At midnight devotees often hear in this shrine strange sounds like the pealing of bells during worship.—  
*Bhaktisudha tarangini*, p. 231.

# 11. SRI BHARATI KRSHNA TIRTHA (1333-80)

# 12. SRI VIDYARANYA (1380-86)

The story of the two brothers from Warangal, as narrated in the *Guruvamsakavya*, follows the account in the *Vidyaranyakala jnana*. Sri Bharatitirtha, though younger in age, became Sri Vidyaranya's senior as sanyasin. He was the senior Sripada (pontiff) and Sri Vidyaranya, the junior.

In the course of his pilgrimage Sri Vidyaranya went to Kasi, where he had a vision of Vyasa. Returning to the south, he was practising meditation on the Matanga hill near the temple of Virupaksha in Hampi, when two brothers Madhava and Sayana, both ministers of Prataparudra, approached him and prayed for the blessing of progeny. The sage told them that they were not destined to have children and consoled them by showing them a way of perpetuating their names. He gave them his commentaries on the Vedas and other works, which they could complete and propagate under their names as *Madhaviyam* and *Sayaniyam*.

The political condition of the Deccan and South India at the time may be briefly noticed. The Hindus never reconciled themselves to Muslim rule, to the break up of the old dynasties, to the destruction or desecration of temples and mathas and to the burden of ever-increasing imposts. After Muhammad-bin-Tughlak's return to Delhi leaving his generals behind, the Andhra Coast was freed by the Nayakas by 1331. The revolt spread westward. Tondaimandalam in the south was also freed. In the midst of all these risings, the brothers Harihara and Bukka, who had gathered a band of followers, were worsted by Ballala III.<sup>4</sup> Smarting under the blow, the brothers approached Sri Vidyaranya near the temple of Virupaksha. The sage took them under his spiritual protection, and the next encounter gave them victory. Following the sage's counsel, they established a kingdom, which they extended by further conquests.

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4 The early history of Harihara and Bukka, about which there are different and conflicting versions, is not quite relevant here.

Directed by the sage they founded a city on a site near the Tungabhadra, opposite to Anegundi, which they named Vidyanagara after the sage.<sup>5</sup> It was popularly called Vijayanagar. The foundation of the city is dated S. 1258—*Dhatu year-Vaisakha Sukla* (April 18, 1336), and it was laid out within nine gates in the form of the mystic Sri Chakra. It grew up in a few years into a magnificent city, and Sri Vidyaranya had the coronation of Harihara celebrated. From that time the brothers marched from victory to victory, and their conquest extended from sea to sea. The emperor placed at his master's feet all his imperial insignia, and henceforth the Sringeri Jagadgurus came to be addressed as *Karnata simhasana sthapakacharya*.

Sri Vidyaranya resumed his pilgrimage and retired to Kasi. In 1346, the victorious Harihara with all his brothers, his brother-in-law and generals visited Sringeri and made a grant of land to the senior Sripada, Sri Bharati Krshnatirtha. The Acharya had meanwhile raised the splendid temple of Sri Vidyasamkara, and at the consecration was present Madhava mantrin with gifts from Bukka who was sharing the responsibilities of the empire. Bukka communicated to Sri Vidyaranya at Kasi the news of the consecration together with a *srinukha* from the senior pontiff Sri Bharatitirtha desiring his return. Sri Vidyaranya returned to Hampi and from there accompanied by Bukka went to Sringeri. To mark the event Bukka granted an agrahara as a homage to the two gurus. In 1380, after placing the pitha in charge of Sri Vidyaranya, Sri Bharatitirtha attained *videha mukti*. On the occasion of his coronation, Harihara II received the Acharya with royal honours and laid at his feet various insignia including umbrellas, conch, disc, fly whisks, drums, bells, torches, banners and festoons of silk, palanquins, a golden

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- 5 In connection with this topic it is not necessary to refer here to the vituperations and fulminations against the Sringeri gurus and Advaita philosophy indulged in by H. Heras, S.J. (*The Beginings of the Kingdom of Vijayanagar*). Without attempting to emulate the language that Heras has unfortunately employed, N. Venkataramanayya (*Vijayanagar—Origin of the City and the Empire*, pp. 48-56) and S. Srikantayya (*Founders of Vijayanagar*, pp. 96-140) have, in sober and impressive language, refuted his *ipse dixit*s.



throne and sandals inlaid with gems, all of which the latter dedicated to Sri Vidyasamkara. The Acharya initiated the emperor into the mysteries of Advaitic meditation,<sup>6</sup> and in 1386 attained *videha mukti*.<sup>7</sup> Shortly after this event Harihara visited Sringeri and founded the agrahara of Vidyaranya in memory of the guru. The vrittis granted on the occasion included one each to the temples of Bharati Ramanatha raised over the samadhi of Sri Bharatitirtha and Vidyavisvesvara built in memory of Sri Vidyaranya.

### *Vidyaranya and Madhava*

Was Vidyaranya the same as Madhavacharya? Before answering this question, it is necessary to differentiate between the Madhavas who figure in contemporary literary works and inscriptions.

Madhava mantrin also called Madarasa Udeyar, a minister of Bukka I and Harihara II, was a son of Chavunda and Macchambika of the Angirasa gotra. An able general, he vanquished the 'Turushkas' of Goa, conquered the West Coast and held the post of governor of Banavase, 12,000 and other territories. He was a Vedic scholar, a disciple of the Saiva teacher Kasi Vilasa Kriyasakti, who took the name of 'Vidyasamkara, the worshipper of Tryambaka.' *Tatparyadipika*, a commentary on *Suta Samhita* is as the colophon<sup>8</sup> shows, his work. Bukka frequently deputed him to Sringeri to give the imperial grants in person to Sri Bharatitirtha.<sup>9</sup>

Another Madhavacharya and his brothers Sayana and Bhoganatha were the sons of Mayana and Srimati of the Bharadvaja gotra, Bodhayana sutra. Sayana had two sons, one of whom was

6 Mentioned in one of his grants.

7 It is not clear where Sri Vidyaranya attained *videha mukti*. There is a samadhi of his in Pampapuri. The temple in Sringeri was perhaps intended to commemorate his sacred memory. VKJ speaks of a temple to Sri Vidyaranya in Sringeri (*M. A. R.* 1932, p. 101).

8 He describes himself as a Bhakta of Kriyasakti, worshipper of Tryambaka and expounder of the Teachings of the Upanishads.

9 *A. R. S. I. E.*, 1916-97 CP of 1380; *M. A. R.* 1921 no. 90; *G. V. K.* VI, v. 59 etc.

Madhava or Mayana, who wrote the *Sarvadaršana samgraha*.<sup>10</sup> Bhoganatha wrote *Udaharanamala* and some other works, and was a companion of prince Sangama.

The works clearly attributable to Madhavacharya, son of Mayana, are *Parasarasmrityakhya*, *Vyavahara Madhaviya*, *Kalamadhaviya*, *Jivamukti viveka* and *Jaiminiyanyayamala* and its *vistara*. In these works Madhava mentions his parents, brothers and his gurus Vidya-tirtha and Bharatitirtha. He describes himself as an *ornament of the sastra of Mimamsa of three kandas* and *prativasanta somayajin* (one who performs the soma sacrifice during spring every year).

Sayana's principal works are—*Subhashitasudhanidhi*, *Prayaschittasudhanidhi*, *Alamkara sudhanidhi*, *Dhatuvritti*, *Vedabhashya*, *Purushartha sudhanidhi* and *Yajna tantra sudhanidhi*. These works were spread over the reigns of Bukka I and Harihara II comprising the second half of the fourteenth century. In one of his works he describes his brother as one enjoying *various pleasures* and in another as a *performer of great sacrifices*.

These works of the two brothers point to the fact that Madhava was a *grhastha* and continued to be one in the second half of the fourteenth century. No inscription either of the fourteenth or of the next few centuries shows the identity of Madhava with Vidyaranya.

Scholars who identify Madhava with Sri Vidyaranya assume that Madhava entered the sanyasa asrama in 1370 or 1377 before the death of Sri Bharatitirtha (1380). This facile assumption unfortunately overlooks all traditional accounts and epigraphic evidence that from the day Harihara I and Bukka first met Sri Vidyaranya to the end of their reigns, they and after them, Harihara II knew Sri Vidyaranya as a sanyasin and not as *grhastha*. The accounts of Nuniz, Ferishta and Buchanan also bear out that Harihara and Bukka came under the influence of an *anchorite*.

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10 Quotes in his works Vedantacharya or Vedanta Desika and Jayatirtha's commentary (c.1390) on Anandatirtha. His guru is said to be Sarvajnavishnu, son of Sarangapani.

Madhavacharya is described as minister and *kulaguru* (family priest)—an office which Bukka and Harihara II would never have thought of assigning to Sri Vidyaranya, who in their estimation was the *effulgent Sun* or an *incarnation of the Supreme Effulgence higher than the Gods of the Trinity* and at whose feet they laid imperial insignia. Bukka's feeling towards Sri Vidyaranya was one of awe and reverence so that out of a sense of humility and deference, he requested the senior Sripada to give a *srinukha* supporting his request for Sri Vidyaranya's return from Kasi about 1356.

On the other hand, mark the royal attitude towards Madhava, as expressed in the words of Sayana himself. In his introduction to *Taittiriya Samhita* and *Rksamhita*, he says that Bukka *commanded* Madhava to write the *bhashya*, and when Madhava suggested that his brother might well be given the task, the emperor directed Sayana to write it. A similar account is found in *Purushartha sudhanidhi* and other works of Sayana.

These considerations do not favour the popular belief that Madhava and Vidyaranya are identical. What would appear to provide the real facts about them is what is narrated in the *Guruvamsakavya*,<sup>11</sup> *Sivatattvaratnakara* and *Vidyaranyakalajnana* that Sri Vidyaranya, out of compassion, gave to Madhava and Sayana what he had written in the shape of Vedic commentaries, *Dhatuvrtti* etc., so that the works after further elaboration at their hands might be known to posterity as *Madhaviya* and *Sayaniya*.

Ahobala Pandita, a nephew of Madhava, who might have known the genesis of the works, praises the Akhilaguru —not a mere *kulaguru*) Vidyaranya as the author of the *Vedabhashyas* and *Dhatuvrtti*, the bestower of imperial dignity on Harihara etc. Side by side with this one meets colophons and introductory verses such as those at the end of each *adhyaya*, *anuvaka*, and *khanda* in the *Veda bhashyas* which are explicit statements that Sayana wrote them.



The two sets of statements cannot possibly be reconciled except by accepting the statement of the *Guruvamsakavya*.<sup>12</sup>

*Expansion of Vedantic Knowledge :*

(a) *Works of Sri Bharatitirtha*

*and Sri Vidyaranya*

*Adhikaranaratnamala* also called *Vaiyasikaratnamala* by Sri Bharatitirtha, is a metrical summary of the adhikaranas of the *Brahmasutra* giving the *purvapaksha* and the *siddhanta*. It has a commentary written by the author himself. This work is sometimes attributed to Sri Vidyaranya, but Appayya Dikshita attributes it to Sri Bharatitirtha.<sup>13</sup> It is a standard work of considerable value to Advaita dialectics. Another important work on Advaita is the *Panchadasi*, so called because of its division into fifteen chapters, dealing with topics of metaphysical and spiritual importance. It is believed to be the joint work of the two Acharyas.<sup>14</sup> In the *Brhadaranyavartikasara*, Sri Vidyaranya summarises Sri Suresvara's work. *Dipikas* on *Aitareya* and *Taittiriya Upanishads* and Sri Samkara's *Aparokshanubhuti* and *Anubhutiprakasika*, a metrical summary of the twelve principal Upanishads, are also attributed to Sri Vidyaranya.

12 For a fuller discussion of the problem see T. V. Mahalingam: *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar*, pp. 357-63; *I. A.* XIV, pp. 1-5 and 17-23; *I. H. Q.* VI, p. 700-17, VII pp. 78-92 and IX pp. 611 *et seq* and *J. I. H.* XII, part II, pp. 241-50. A parallel instance comes to mind from Tanjore in the seventeenth century. *Sangita Sudha*, a treatise on music, is said to have been written by Raghunatha Nayaka, king of Tanjore. Venkatamakhi expressly says that his father Govinda Dikshita wrote it. It may be that the king and his minister between them wrote and published it or the Dikshita gave his work to the king to be published in his name.

13 *Siddhantalesasangraha* II p. 93.

14 *Sri Bharatitirtha vidyaranya munisvarau.*

*Jivanmukti Viveka* is believed to have been written after *Panchadasi* was written.

*Drgdrsyaviveka*<sup>15</sup> also seems to have been written by both the Acharyas<sub>16</sub>. Sri Vidyaranya pays homage to both Samkarananda and Sri Vidyatirtha. The works of these two Jagadgurus are among the greatest treatises in post-Samkara Advaita literature, and in them, they have brought to bear a synthetic spirit. Both of them occupy a unique place in the history of religion. Sri Vidyaranya's powers of exposition are stated to be 'more wonderful than those of Brahma; he can make (by his dialectics) the eloquent dumb and (by his instructions) the dumb the most eloquent. Sri Bharatitirtha 'was the refuter of the doctrines of Bhatta (Kumarila), Buddha, Jina, Guru (Prabhakara), the Logicians and the Charvakas, and the establisher of the Advaita doctrine.'<sup>17</sup> His 'impressive and dignified discourses resemble the uninterrupted flow of Ganga from the Himalayan slopes' And all this greatness came to them through the blessings of Sri Vidyasamkara<sub>18</sub>.

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- 15 The commentator Brahmananda Bharati ascribes it to Sri Bharatitirtha, and Nischaladasa to Sri Vidyaranya. In some manuscripts, which include the commentary of Anandajnana, Sri Samkara is said to be the author. Obviously by Samkara is meant Sri Vidyaranya.
  - 16 The Acharya who teaches the sastras is the vidyaguru ; but he is not necessarily the person who ordains his disciple into sanyasa asrama. The Jagadguru of Sringeri is *vidyaguru* to a host of disciples, but gives *sanyasa* only to a very few,—in modern times only to the disciple whom he nominates as his successor. He is *dikshaguru* to disciples who receive mantras from him. *Acharya* and *guru* are used synonymously ; *acharya* is a holy preceptor who teaches by example and precept, and *guru* is the preceptor who instructs in *jnana* (*gu* signifies darkness and *ru* that which dispels it; he is so called because he dispels nescience or *avidya*.)
  - 17 The introductory verses in the relevant imperial grants.
  - 18 E. I. III, 23. Also S. V. Venkatesvara in *New Lights on the Beginnings of Vijayanagar History*, p. 11, who says that Vidyatirtha, Bharatitirtha and Srikantha refer to the same individual guru who was also known as Vidyasamkara !!!

(b) *Works of Samkarananda*

A *dipika* on the *Brahmasutra*, a gloss on the *Bhagavad Gita*, called *Gitatatparyabodhini* and *vrittis* on twentyseven *Upanishads* including the principal ones, and *Atmapurana* or *Upanishadratna*, a work in *anusthup* verse giving the purport of the *Upanishads* are his works. He sat at the feet of Sri Vidyatirtha, who was his Vidya guru, and was ordained by Anandatman (Anandatma Sarasvati). He is said to have been a Vidya guru of Sri Vidyaranya and a native of Madhyarjuna (Tiruvidaimarudur) in the Chola country.

(c) *Other writers*

Amalananda, referred to in the last chapter, as the author of *Kalpataru*, a commentary on the *Bhamati*, and of *Sastradarpana*, honours as his Vidyaguru Sukhaprakasa belonging to a *sisya parampara* of Sri Jnanottama Acharya. The author of *Nayana-prasadani*, a commentary on the *Chitsukhi*, is Pratyagrupa Bhagavan, a disciple of Pratyakprakasa. He also seems to belong to a *sisya-parampara* of Sringeri. Contemporary celebrities include Anandapurna Vidyasagara, Akhandanandamuni and Anandagiri, but it is not known whether they were connected with any of the Sringeri *sisyaparamparas*.

(d) *Saiva teachers :*

(i) *Srikantha*

Srikantha is mentioned as one of the gurus of Madhavacharya and his brothers and of prince Sangama. He was a disciple of Paramatmatirtha. It is obviously wrong to indentify him with Sri Vidyatirtha as is sometimes done.

(ii) *Kriyasakti*

Kriyasakti, a follower of the Kashmir school of Saivism, was a Vedic scholar and 'promoter of the path of the Upanishads.' To please Madhavamantrin, one of his disciples, he 'gave to the world' the *Saivagama sara samgraha* which contains the essence of the Vedas, Puranas and Samhitas. He was also a rajaguru,<sup>19</sup> of Bukka I and Harihara II. The latter describes himself 'as a bee at the lotus feet of Tryambaka and pupil of the teachers Kriyasakti and Vidyaranya.'<sup>20</sup>

19 E. C. VII, Sk. 281, XI Dg 23, and V Cn. 256.

20 A. R. S. I. E. 1925-26, p. 137.



According to *Vidyaranya kalajñana*, Kriyasakti was a disciple of Sri Vidyaranya.<sup>21</sup> He died in 1388, and in 1389 Immadi Bukka Raya, son of Harihara I, renamed a village as Vidyasamkarapuram and gave it as a gift to the linga of Vidyasamkara installed there.<sup>22</sup> Kriyasakti took the name of Vidyasamkara, after his illustrious paramaguru. A writer in the *Q. J. M. S.*<sup>23</sup> has put forward fanciful arguments to prove that Kriyasakti was no other than Sri Vidyaranya. One can only say to this conclusion *non sequitur*. Kriyasakti is a shining example of a Saiva teacher professing the Vedic form of worship and following the Upanishadic ideals under the influence of Sri Vidyaranya.

It may be mentioned in this connection that Vemana Bhatta Bana, a sishya of Sri Vidyaranya, was later honoured as a court poet in Kondavidu.

(e) *An interesting Agamic treatise*

Rajendra Lal Mitra has brought to light a manuscript of considerable interest from Sitamarhi (Mazaffarpur district, Bihar). *Gadyavallari*, which is the name of the work, a treatise on *Sri Vidya* dealing with sadhanas such as nyasa and japa enumerates a guru-parampara.<sup>24</sup> Beginning with Siva, the gurus are enumerated in the following order—Vishnu, Brahma, Vasistha, Sakti, Parasara, Vyasa, Suka, Gaudapada, Govinda, Samkara, Visvarupa, Bodhaghana, Jnanaghana, Jnanottama Siva, Jnanagiri, Simhagiri, Isvartirtha, Nrsimhatirtha, Vidyatirtha Siva, Bharatitirtha and Vidyaranya. So far the lineage is identical with the apostolic succession in the

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- 21 *M. A. R.* 1932 and *Q. J. M. S.* XXVI, pp. 267-8, which give a summary in English of *V K J.*
  - 22 *E. C. M. b.* 11; also *MAR* 1941, p. 31.
  - 23 Article entitled *Rajaguru Kriyasakti* by A. Venkatasubbaiya—*Q. J. M. S.* VIII, pp. 118-36; S. Srikantayya refutes the points made here in his *Founders of Vijayanagar*, pp. 143 ff. Hechcha C. P. E. C. VIII Sorab 375 (1347) says he was the guru of Madhava, Minister of Marappa and praised as an incarnation of Siva. Also *M. A. R.* 1929 p. 168 and *E. C. VII*, Shikarpur. In 281 *E. C. V* Chennarayapatna 256 C. P. of 1378, he is mentioned as *Kulaguru* of Harihara II.
  - 24 *Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts* VII No. 2261 (Published by the Bengal Government).

Sarada pitha. Then is mentioned Sri Malayanandadevatirtha Sarasvati who was initiated into Sri Vidya by Sri Vidyaranya, and then follows a line of sishyas ending with Anandachitpratibimba, guru of the author Sri Nijatmaprakasanandanatha Mallikarjuna yogindra. Here is one of the several paramparas of the Sringeri pitha, which is the repository of mantras, yantras and yogasadanās. That Sri Vidya, as expounded by Sri Gaudapada, Sri Samkara, Sri Vidyaranya and others is not different from Brahmayidya of the Upanishads is borne out by works of this kind.

### *Gifts to Scholars*

Sri Bharatitirtha endowed one hundred and twenty scholars with vrittis or small holdings of land. The long list of donees include Narayana Vajapeya Yaji, Pandari (Panduranga) Diksita and Narahari Somayaji who propagated the *Veda bhashyas*. The first was honoured with the title *mantrasiddhi*, and the other two as *pedda vidyavallabha*. Their descendants continue to enjoy special privileges in Sringeri. The five hundred vrittis of the Vidyaranya-pura grant (1386) of Harihara II include man given to scholars. The Bhanuvalli C. P.<sup>36</sup> grant of Harihara II (1397) was in favour of Madhavendra of the Kausika gotra, Apastamba sutra, engaged in the pursuit of Vedānta. Harihara II gave the village of Belugula to two disciples of Sri Vidyaranya.

### *Mathas*

Specific allotment was made for ascetics residing in Sringeri and pursuing Vedantic studies. Under Sri Vidyaranya's direction, the emperors made endowments to mathas founded by him or by Sri Bharatitirtha in different parts of South India, some of which rose to importance as branches of the Sringeri Sarada pitha or as subordinate monastic establishments. Prince Chikka Raya (afterwards Virupaksha I) made a grant,<sup>36</sup> to Satyatirtha of Muniyur matha which marks the origin of the Sakatapuram or Bandigade matha.

Hariharapura, an agrahara about six miles from Sringeri, was founded by Harihara II, and Sri Ramachandra Sarasvati was the

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25 M. A. R. 16, p. 59 also of 33 no. 25.

26 E. C. VI, Koppa 31 A. D. 1381, also 30 (A. D. 1878) gift under orders of Sri Vidyaranya.

first Acharya of the matha that was established there.<sup>27</sup> The Tirthamuttur matha (Tirthahalli taluk) and the Kudali matha also came into existence some centuries later under the guidance and encouragement of the Sringeri gurus and the emperors. The agraharas of Srngapura and Vidyaranyapura were laid out by Harihara II.

A record from Kanchipuram,<sup>28</sup> dated 1378 relates to the grant of the village of Iluppaipattu to Paramahansa parivrajakacharya Vedendra Sagara Sripada of Veda matha in the Vishnu temple there.

### *Temples*

A vritti was allotted to the Sri Janardana temple. Of the new temples built during this period, the Vidyasamkara temple is the grandest. Sri Vidyaranya substituted the present golden image of Sri Sarada for the one in sandalwood originally consecrated by Sri Samkara over a Srichakra on a rock and over which a small temple had risen. The temple was enlarged. The Bharati Ramanatha temple was built over the *samadhi* of Sri Bharatitirtha and the Vidyavisvesvara temple in memory of Sri Vidyaranya. Sri Vidyaranya made grants for the worship of Gopinatha in Paschimavahini, a few furlongs from Sringeri on the westward bend of the Tunga, and consecrated lingas and Sri Chakras in several places.

### *A Samasthanam is born*

The first land grant (1346),<sup>29</sup> to Sringeri matha was that of Harihara I, his brothers and other relations consisting of nine villages in Kelanad for the 'undisputed performance of Sri Bharati Krshna tirtha Sri Padangaluvuru's tapas and the maintenance of resident ascetics, attendants and disciples.' The second, dated 1356,<sup>30</sup> and inscribed on a stone to the north of the Ganapati

27 E. C. VI Koppa 49 (1392).

28 S. I. T. Ins. I, no. 350.

29 Srngapura grant (stone) E. C. VI, Sg. 1.

30 M. A. R./1916, p. 56. On the top are figures of Brahma (who proclaimed the Vedas) and Vyasa (who condensed their message in his sutras). Also M. A. R. 33. No. 2.



Vagisvari temple, opens with a homage to Sri Vidyatirtha and records a gift of land of the revenue of three hundred gadyanas. Bukka made this grant during his visit to the Vidyasamkara temple.<sup>31</sup>

Out of these two gifts of a total of nine hundred and twenty-eight gadyanas, Sri Bharatitirtha marked out lands yielding six hundred Pagodas and divided them into one hundred and twenty vrittis of five pagodas each, some of which he gave away to learned Brahmans, and set apart the rest for worship in the Vidyasamkara

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- 31 Ignorance of the tradition that Sri Vidyasamkara is believed to inspire and guide affairs in Sringeri even after his disappearance within an underground chamber, and that his name is still used in the official seals, has unfortunately led R. Narasimhachar and after him, M. H. Krishna into the error, perpetuated in several publications, of believing that Bukka saw Sri Vidyasamkara in flesh and blood in 1356 and that the Acharya should have died later than that year. The records mention that he had *darsana* of Sri Vidyatirtha Sripadangalu, which means *darsana* of the linga representing him. This was Bukka's first visit to Sringeri after the consecration of the Vidyasamkara temple. Strangely enough the two scholars have overlooked the statement in the kadita that out of this grant provision was made for *worship in the Vidyasamkara temple*. Were Sri Vidyasamkara alive, he would have been the donee; the fact that Sri Bharatitirtha was the donee is proof that he was the reigning Acharya at the time. A similar difficulty is experienced by scholars regarding a C. P. dated *Kshaya* (s. 1308 expired) *Ashadha Su 2*, which records a *sasana* of Harihara II before Vidyaranya and another dated *Kshaya* (s. 1309-current *Jyeshtha Ba 13*), on the death of the Acharya. It should be obvious that the first was made before the image of the sage. See also *E. C. VI Koppa 33* (A. D. 1408)—gift to God Vidyasamkara, and *Koppa 34* (1356)—grant before Vidyasamkara to Vidyasamkara deva Odeyar. All these gifts were made in the presence of Vidyatirtha in his form of 'celestial glory'—*not* in his corporeal frame.

and other temples, for the maintenance of his disciples, lay an monastic, *srotriyas*, *somayajis* and attendants.

A subsequent land grant of Bukka<sup>32</sup> was of the value of two hundred and twenty two and a half pagodas in Kikundanadu to which was added a grant by Chikka Raya (afterwards Harihara II) of land in Kikundanadu and Kodanadu.

In 1380 Harihara II consolidated all the previous grants<sup>33</sup> and made an additional grant to Sri Vidyaranya. In 1387, after Sri Vidyaranya had attained videhamukti, a further grant<sup>34</sup> by Harihara was divided into hundred vrittis of five pagodas each, four of which were allotted to temples and the rest to competent scholars. A supplemental grant of thirty vrittis was made in 1389-90, when the emperor again visited Sringeri. The total value of all these lands was three thousand and three pagodas; and this gave to Sringeri the name of *murū savira sime*. The temples that benefited by the vrittis were those of Sri Vidyasamkara, Sri Janardana, Sri Bharati Ramanatha and Sri Vidya Visvesvara in Sringeri and Chaturmurti Vidyasvara in Simhagiri.

Below the grant of Harihara I in 1346 is inscribed one of Pandya Chakravarti Sri Kikkayitayi<sup>35</sup>, endowing the village of Hosavur in Santalige nadu for the maintenance of the Acharya's attendants and servants.

32 *M. A. R.* 1916, p. 56 ff.

33 *ibid.* C. P's and Kadita in Sg. Also *M. A. R.* 33 no. 33 and 24.

34 *ibid.* Vidyananyapura grant.

35 *E. C.* VI, Sg. 1; *M. A. R.* 1916, p. 57.

This queen who bears Alupa royal titles was a prominent figure in Tulu land. N. Venkataramanayya thinks that Hoysala Ballala III married her for political reasons. (*Origin of the City and Empire of Vijayanagar*, pp. 134-5). Subsequently she became a vassal of Harihara I and attended in 1346 the festival which he and his brothers celebrated in Sringeri before Sri Bharatitirtha, to commemorate his conquests from sea to sea.

Other grants<sup>36</sup> outside Sringeri include two by Bukka I (1375) to the shrines of Sri Vidyatirtha and Sri Vidyaranya and one by Harihara II (1384) to Sri Vidyaranya.

The pontificate of Sri Bharati Krshnatirtha and Sri Vidyaranya witnessed the conversion of Sringeri, hitherto a cluster of hermitages, into an *imperium et impera*. To the Vyakhyana simhasana in the Sarada pitha was subsequently added secular authority over the newly created samsthanam. From the beginning the lands were not held by the gurus as their personal property, but as a trust intended for the preservation and spread of the ideals of the pitha; the actual beneficiaries were ascetics, scholars, temples and seats of learning. The creation of the samsthanam marks the expression of reverence and gratitude on the part of the early emperors of Vijayanagar who were deeply conscious of the debt they owed to the Jagadgurus whose spiritual benediction and guidance helped them to found and consolidate one of the greatest empires known to Indian History.

The Vidyasamkara-Bharatitirtha-Vidyaranya epoch marks the rise of the Sarada pitha to a height of eminence and influence hardly excelled by any other spiritual institution in the country. The passage of six centuries has added a bright halo round the memory of these masters. What greater tribute was ever paid by temporal authority to sages and saints than those conveyed in the following excerpts?—

‘The swan Bukka sports happily near the lotus Bharatitirtha, which having sprung from Vidyatirtha, possesses the fragrance of joy from a knowledge of non-dualism and expands by the rays of Vidyaranya.’

‘May the wonderful glances of Vidyaranya, which resemble showers of camphor dust, garlands of Kalhara flowers, rays of the moon, sandal paste, and waves of milk-ocean, and which shower the nectar of compassion, bring you happiness.’

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36 Udaya betta inscription—A. R. S. I. E. 1929, p. 45 and Kundapur inscription *ibid.* p. 44.



'Can he be Brahma? We do not see four faces. Can he be Visnu? He has not got four arms. Can he be Siva? No oddness of the eye is observed. Having thus argued for a long time, the learned have come to the conclusion that Vidyaranya is the Supreme Light incarnate.'

*Resume : A New epoch*

Vedic dharma which had received a rude shock under Muslim rule in the north found a bulwark in the south. The defence was on all fronts. On the political front, Sri Vidyaranya's grace helped in the formation of a Hindu empire. On the socio-religious front, to begin with, worship that had been suspended in several temples including the famous temples of Srirangam and Madurai was restored. Mysore inscriptions speak of grants to temples under the direction or in honour of Sri Vidyaranya. From now on Vijayanagar emperors and their vassals carried out renovations, with extensions on a lavish scale, of hundreds of temples. Moral regulations and ritualistic codes were re-interpreted and explained, a task to which institutions of all the religious denominations, Dvaita, Visishtadvaita and Advaita, addressed themselves with remarkable energy, exhibiting a united purpose, however much they differed as philosophical systems. For the benefit of the followers of the smrtis, the sutras of Jaimini were explained in simple verses in the *Jaiminiyanyayamalavistara*, the *Yajñatantrasudhanidhi*, the *Prayascittasudhanidhi* and the *Kalanirnaya*. The *Subhashita sudhanidhi* was a popular collection of moral precepts while the *Purushartha sudhanidhi* explained the fourfold purpose of a good and full life. The *Parasara smṛti vyākhyāna* together with *Vyavahara Madhava* provided a compendium of law, both secular and religious. These and similar works are either attributed or owe their inspiration to one or other of the three names—Sri Vidyaranya, Madhava and Sayana.

The new spirit, which, by quickening the Hindu conscience everywhere, withstood the shock and stress of the political and social convulsions that threatened to engulf the land, succeeded in creating a commonwealth of letters and a reorganised socio-religious order, which though generally fostered by all the religious sects

owed a great deal to the lead given by the Sarada Pitha. Thenceforward to imparting Brahmavidya to the elect, and training spiritual aspirants, the Jagadgurus added the work of prescribing proper modes of divine services in temples and guiding the socio-religious activities of the millions of disciples so as to bring them under the discipline of religion. They also assumed the authority to enforce sanction on delinquents as a means of leading them to the path of repentance through the imposition of a strict course of penance or propitiatory acts, to which reference will be made in the succeeding chapters as *achara vichara* or *vyavahara*.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE FORMATIVE PERIOD OF THE SAMASTHANAM

*Purushottama Bharati Charita*, a manuscript in the library of the Sringeri Matha, which is a composition of Vishnu, a poet patronised by the Matha, gives an account of the four Acharyas who reigned after Sri Vidyaranya. It was composed in the reign of Devaraya, and may be assigned the beginning of the 15th century,—before 1422, the year of Devaraya's death.

#### 13. SRI CHANDRASEKHARA BHARATI I

(1386 - 9)

was Sri Vidyaranya's immediate successor. The Acharya received Harihara II at Sringeri where the emperor erected a temple over the samadhi of Sri Vidyaranya and founded the agrahara of Vidyaranyaapuram. He was frequently on tour, and during his absence, the matha affairs were administered by his successor-designate.

#### 14. SRI NARASIMHA BHARATI I

(1389 - 1408).

Harihara II invited the new Acharya to the capital. Later the Acharya visited Gokarna and consecrated Sri Narasimha in Haladi, also called Nrpudattapuram. He gave spiritual initiation to Virupaksha and Devaraya. Virupaksha visited Sringeri in 1404. An inscription, dated 1433, near a tank in Haravari records a grant made when 'Paramahamsaparivrajakacharya Narasimha Bharati Odeyar was seated on the spiritual throne of Sringeri'. In 1406, Goapuradisvara Bachanna Odeyar (Bhaskara), a son of Viravasanta Madhavamantrin, governor of Barakura under Bukka II, gave lands to the matha.<sup>1</sup> The Acharya attained mukti at Hampi.

Sri Narashimha Bharati I had two disciples, Sri Chandrasekhara and Sri Purushottama.



### 15. SRI CHANDRASEKHARA BHARATI II

was acclaimed head of the pitha in the presence of the emperor at Hampi. He then spent some time at Sringeri and proceeded to Trikudalu Narsipur (T'Narsipur), at the confluence of the Kaveri and Kabbini rivers where, at the asrama of Achyutaranya he attained Videhamukti. The emperor's officers attended the obsequial ceremonies and led the junior sishya to Hampi where he was ordained Jagadguru.

### 16. SRI PURUSHOTTAMA BHARATI I

(mukti 1448)

blessed the emperor Devaraya and his feudatories and went to Sringeri to take over the management of the matha. In 1446 the Acharya received a grant of the village of Harihalli by Mangarasa, a governor under the viceroy of Tulu and Konkan provinces.

Devaraya granted (1432) a village to Purushottama Aranya,<sup>2</sup> a disciple of the Acharya.

Madhava Bharati, another disciple, founded a matha in Gokarna with an endowment from the emperor.<sup>3</sup> Under Devaraya's orders, the provincial governor of Goa and Mahapradhana Ramachandradeva Odeyar made grants, for offerings to the Mahabalesvara and other temples in Gokarna, with directions that the charity should be conducted by Madhava Bharati of Sringeri and also control over the Amaresvara temple. Yet another disciple Visvesvara Bharati acquired a grant from the emperor, but since he did not leave any disciple, the grant lapsed to the State. In 1430, the emperor granted, to Visvesvararanya of the Kallu matha at Hampi, another disciple, the village of Andavali in Banavase 12,000 for the conduct of daily worship in the shrine of Sri Vidyasamkara, consecrated in the matha founded in Visvesvaranyapuram near Hampi. This grant was perhaps made when the Jagadguru visited Vijayanagar and was received by Devaraya with royal honours and a grant of the village of Kanguvalli for the

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2 *M. A. R.* 1916 pp 60-1; 1933 No. 26

3 *ibid* No. 27; *Sg S.* 7.

4 *ibid* 1934 Nos. 29 and 30.

5 *ibid* 1934 No. 27.

maintenance of the temples, the resident yatis and other charities in Sringeri.

**17. SRI SAMKARANANDA BHARATI**  
(1448 - 1454)

After his accession to the 'pitha' Sri Samkarananda visited Vijayanagar, invited by Mallikarjuna and prince Bukka Raya,, when the emperor gave him lands of the revenue value of one thousand and six hundred and ninety seven gadyanas, and Bhanappa, presumably governor of Barakur, the village of Kongavalli in his province.

A label bearing the Acharya's name on a pillar of the sandhya-mandapa of the Sranganathesvara temple in Kanikatte (Arisikere taluk) is shown as a place to which Sri Samkara Bharati often resorted for meditation.

**18. SRI CHANDRASEKHARA BHARATI III**  
( 1454 - 64 )

**19. SRI NRSIMHA BHARATI II**  
( 1464 - 79 )

Sri Samkarananda Bharati's successor was Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati III, who was succeeded by Sri Nrsimha Bharati II. A record from Pampapura (Yedatore) relates to a grant<sup>a</sup> by the residents or Halli Hiriyur to Chikka Dikshita, a disciple of Sri Nrsimha Bharati II, to conduct a feeding house on the banks of the Kaveri in the name of the Acharya.

**20. SRI PURUSHOTTAMA BHARATI II**  
( 1479 - 1517 )

During the pontificate of Sri Purushottama Bharati II Vijayanagar witnessed two usurpations, by Saluva Narasimha in 1486 and by Narasa Nayaka of the Tulu dynasty in 1491. Before his hazardous expedition (1515-6) against Vira Rudra Gajapati of Kalinga, Emperor Krishnadeva Raya sought the blessings of Sri Purushottama

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6 Sg R. 6  
7 M. A. R. 1934, no. 28.  
8 *ibid*, 1934, no. 31.  
9 *ibid*, 1935, No. 39.

Bharati. The guru conveyed his blessings through one of his disciples Vidyaranya, who on arrival at the imperial capital, was received with honours and lodged in Hampi. The emperor granted<sup>10</sup> to the Sringeri matha Huyyuru in Barakur rajya and the attached hamlets, and also ordered the immediate restoration to Sringeri of Gavaturu, Gajanuru, Mandali, Harakera, Shimoga and Sollebyle, formerly enjoyed by the matha but had later gone out of its hands. The emperor prayed for the guru's blessings to secure him 'victory in his campaigns, loyalty of his adherents and all prosperity for himself and his kingdom.' The Acharya's blessings had a marvellous effect; Krishnadeva Raya conquered Kalinga, recaptured Raichur and routed the forces of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and Golkonda. During his sojourn in Hampi Vidyaranya organised the matha there. The emperor issued orders to village officers to obey the Sringeri gurus as their masters.<sup>11</sup>

During his pilgrimage to Tulunad, the Acharya was entertained by the Chief Samkara and worshipped Samkara Narayana and Lakshmi Narasimha on the banks of the Aghanasini.

## 21. SRI RAMACHANDRA BHARATI (1517 - 60)

In 1545 Honnappa Nayaka, a dalvoi of Emperor Sadasivah Raya, granted to the matha Bastihalli in Aragarajya.<sup>12</sup>

During his visit to Karkala, the Acharya responded to the invitation of the local Jains and visited their temple, where to the astonishment of the assembled worshippers the idol appeared as Ananta Padmanabha.

The 'Kudli matha' was founded by Narasimha Bharati, also called Ammaji Svami, a disciple of the Sringeri guru. His immediate successors were Vidyaranya Bharati and Narasimha Bharati.

The next two Acharyas were.

10 Sg. R. 8 and 9

11 M. A. R. 34 no. 32.

12 *ibid*, 10



22. *SRI NARASIMHA BHARATI III*23. *SRI NARASIMHA BHARATI IV*

Their regins covered about fifty years 1560-99. Sri Narasimha Bharati IV founded the Narasimhapura agrahara near Vashishthasrama in memory of his guru <sup>13</sup>

A grant <sup>14</sup> in 1573 by Sri Ranga Raya I, who ruled from Penukonda, expressly states that it was made when Sri Narasimha Bharati occupied the throne of Dharma in Sringeri fostering the six darsans.

The period of about two centuries and a half covered by this chapter marks the relations of Sringeri with the Vijayanagar empire during the years of its prosperity and subsequent decline. The matha acquired possessions outside Sringeri Samsthanam proper, and enjoyed full rights over its lands with control over the mineral resources. It enjoyed the right to cultivate supari (arecanut), grow sandal trees and create new plantations. It was exempted from royal customs and taxes and the requirment to supply labour for royal purposes. Subject to royal control, the authorities of the samsthanam were empowered to enforce law and order within their jurisdiction. Properties of disciples, who died without heirs, were administered by the samsthanam; imperial sanction was necessary only where the value of the property exceeded a certain limit. In the imperial capital, the guru was shown all honours pertaining to royalty, including the *adda palakki*

'The blessed message that emanated from the lotus-like face of Sri Samkara Bhagavatpada got diversified a thousandfold in the expositions of the Acharyas who came after him, even as the Ganga stream gets variegated while flowing over different lands.' It was the task of Sri Bharatitirtha and Sri Vidyaranya to link these varie-

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13 M. A. R. 1933 no. 22 n.

14 *ibid*, 1916 p. 62.

gated streams, and canalize them through several monastic establishments. And their successors added to the number of these monasteries, the heads of which were disciples of the Acharyas of Sringeri or derived inspiration and guidance from them. To these monasteries, as to Sringeri, flocked ascetics and scholars for contemplation, study and the elucidation of the truth of Advaita in its manifold aspects and refutation of the arguments of rival schools. These mathas had also shrines and feeding houses attached to them.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONSOLIDATION OF THE SAMSTHANAM

The history of Sringeri during the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries presents an overall picture of *chiarascuro*. Movements of armies, revolutions and dynastic changes created political instability, under which the Sringeri samsthanam lost some of its holdings and other valuable property. This dark side was largely relieved by the devotion of the Karnata ruling dynasties and their devoted services to the samsthanam. South India was studded with a network of monasteries including those of the Saiva sects—Virasaivas of Karnata and the Siddhantins of the Tamil country, and the Vaishnava sects—both of the Visishtadvaita and Dvaita schools,—all presided over by eminent saints. There were, besides, grhastha scholars of outstanding learning. Their rivalry was exhibited more on the intellectual plane in the form of polemics not often free from sarcasm, but on the social level there was less of cantankerous jealousy. They fostered faith and morality among the people. The dynastic rulers were imbued with enlightened tolerance and fostered all the schools. It is nevertheless, no exaggeration to say that for spotless saintliness and depth of erudition, the Sringeri Jagadgurus commanded the highest esteem.

Now to the seventeenth century which this chapter covers: After the decisive Muslim victory in the battle of Talikota (Raksasi-Tangadi) in 1565 and the wanton and savage destruction of the imperial city of Vijayanagar, Tirumala set up his capital in Penukonda. Civil wars and invasions of the armies of Bijapur and Golkonda spread confusion all round. The Nayaks of Tanjore and Madurai had thrown off the imperial yoke, while those of Vellore and Keladi and the Odeyars of Mysore, after they came to power, owned formal allegiance to the shadow empire. After 1630, the Bijapur army under Randaula Khan invaded the south. Sriranga III, faced with rebellion in the south and harassment from Bijapur and Golkonda, and defeated in battle at Vellore, was given asylum by the Keladi Nayak and lived in Belur. The fortunes of the Sringeri samsthanam during this century must be studied against this background. Deprived of the support of the central authority, the



samsthanam lost its grip over the outlying villages which fell into the hands of adventurers and unscrupulous persons. The Keladi Nayaks, though followers of the Vira Saiva school, were devoted to the Sringeri pitha. Venkatappa Nayak was the first ruler of this house to render help to Sringeri. Then followed a period of consolidation of the holdings that the samsthanam was able to retain and retrieve.

### 23. SRI ABAINAVA NARSIMHA BHARATI I (1599 - 1622)

An expert in mantrasastra, Sri Abhinava Narsimha Bharati was an adept of a high order. A commentary on the *Siva Gita*, that he wrote, is an outstanding work. He installed a linga named Ramesvara (1602) and founded an agrahara named Narasimhapura after his guru. When the Acharya visited the Malahanikaresvara temple and noticed the absence of any Ganesa image there, he painted with a piece of turmeric a figure of the God on one of the front pillars and worshipped it. Ever since, the outlines of Ganesa have been bulging out, presenting a basrelief, and the granite stone behind it now sounds hollow inside, while over the rest of the pillar, it is quite solid.

#### *Sivaganga Matha*

The Acharya founded a matha in Sivaganga and placed Sri Samkara Bharati, one of his disciples, in charge of it. Sri Samkara

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- 1 E. C. VI, Sg. 22 ; It was completed in 1544 (AD 1622)
  - 2 E. C. VI, Sg 2 M. A. R. 1933, no. 22.
  - 3 This event is sometimes erroneously attributed to Sri Sacchidananda Bharati (1705-41). E. C. VI, Sg. 4(1685) registers a grant to this pillar Ganesa by Siddhamanji, daughter of Sivappa Nayak by queen Lingammamji. G. V. K. definitely attributes the event to this Acharya.
  - 4 Ordained in 1615, Sri Samkara Bharati who had toured extensively in North and South India, was an eminent scholar. One of his grhasta disciples is mentioned in a grant (Mac. MSS-Madras Oriental MSS Library, S. No. 1505). Raja Odeyar, Ruler of Mysore was interested in getting the new matha in Sivaganga established.

Bharati presided over the new matha till 1656, which has since had an uninterrupted succession of gurus.

#### *Avani Matha*

According to tradition the Avani matha was founded by a Sri Nrsimha Bharati Svami of Sringeri matha, while he was camping in Kolar, and placed in charge of one of his disciples.

#### *Venkatappa Nayak I (1586-1629) and Sringeri*

The association of the Keladi Nayaks with Sringeri began in the reign of Sadasiva Nayak. Venkatappa Nayak I invited the guru to his court in Ikkeri and presented him with his green flag. The Nayak put up extensions to the matha building in Sringeri, founded an agraharam, and granted land in Mukkarnad yielding more than fifty pagodas. In 1622, the guru paid another visit to Ikkeri, accompanied by his disciple and successor Sri Sacchidananda Bharati. The junior Acharya captivated all the scholars assembled in the Nayak's court by his masterly discourses in Tarka, Mimamsa and Vedanta. On his return to Sringeri, the senior Acharya attained *videha mukti*.

A Vijayanagar feudatory, Virupaksha Chief of Jambur whom Sankanna of Ikkeri had defeated was a disciple of the Acharya.

#### 25. SRI SACCHIDANANDA BHARATI I (1622-33)

There is a biographical account of the Acharya's early life in a manuscript in the Sringeri library in Kalahasti Bhatta (*Gargya gotra; Yajussakha*) and his son Ahobala Bhatta were renowned Vedic scholars. Ahobala had three sons. Nrsimha, the eldest, became a sanyasin under the name of Narayana

5 M. A. R., 1929, P. 88

6 Was the founder a former Narasimha Bharati?

7 E. C. VI, Sg. 5 ;M. A. R. 1928, pp. 15 ff ; and Sg R 11. The letters from the Nayaks to the Jagadgurus ended with the word *binnaha* in Nagari script, expressive of respectful submission. This ruler was a great scholar and is praised as *Visuddhadvita-pratishthapana-durandara*.

Asrama. The other sons Narahari and Alakadri lived in Ardhanaris varapura. The prayers of Alakadri and his wife Timmamba were answered, and they were blessed with two sons Nrsimha and Brahma. The two boys, who shortly afterwards, lost their mother, were taken care of by their maternal uncle, who performed their upanayanam and looked after their education. Driven by famine, the family migrated south and moved from one village to another, such as Sholavadan, Ramanathapuram, Mulappanayakkapuram, Virabhupalasagaram, Kilamangalam and Melamangalam and lived for sometime in Madurai. Nrsimha visited Ramesvaram and other holy places, and finally betook himself to Sringeri, in the hope of winning the hand of a daughter of his maternal uncle who was an honoured Vidvan in the matha. Jagadguru Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati, who was struck with young Nrsimha's character and attainments instilled in him a feeling of vairagya made him his successor with the diksha name of Sri Sacchidananda Bharati.

Shortly after he assumed the headship of the pitha, the new Acharya visited Ikkeri on the invitation of Venkatappa Nayak. From there, accompanied by the Nayak, he went to Kollur to worship Sri Mukambika.

### *Some Polemical Contests*

In a polemical contest held in the presence of the king, Rangoji, an Advaita Scholar from Kasi, worsted a Madhva scholar named Vidyadisa Bhatta. Rangoji's brother Bhattoji Diksita challenged Ramanujacharya, a court Pandita and exponent of Visishtadvaita, and defeated him in controversy. Ramanuja, relinquished all his honours in favour of Bhattoji.<sup>10</sup> The guru conferred on the king the title of 'Vaidika - advaita - siddhanta - pratisthapaka'.

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8 Also called gunnavarankottai, Its former name was Jyadrandapatti. Situated at the confluence of Hanid ravadi and Vaigai near Betlagunduljin Madurai district. it has a temple of Rama whose praises the Acharya has sung.

9 G. V. K. X, v. 16.

10 Q. J. M. S., XXII, p. 78. Rangoji and Bhattoji both sons of Lakshmidhara, were disciples of the renowned Appayya Dikshita. Bhattoji's work *Tatvakaustubha* was written at the instance of Venkatappa Nayak. It refutes Dvaitavada. He has to his credit works on Vyakarana sastra also.



*Bhairava's Incursion*

Shortly after Virabhadra Nayak ascended the throne of Ikkeri, Bhairava, chief of Kalasa, invaded his territory and captured a slice of it which included Sringeri. In his cupidity, he committed the irreverent act of ordering the guru to come to his court and compelling him to yield the valuables of the matha. Nothing perturbed, the guru went into meditation and refused to yield to aggression. Bhairava then went to Sringeri and plundered its wealth. and on his way back defeated the Nayak forces that had come for the relief of the guru. Thus emboldened, he again went to Sringeri, and when the guru was about to leave the matha, relief came from the Nayak. Bhairava came a third time to plunder the matha. Left with no help but the power of his tapasya, the guru retired to his meditation, and saw in a vision the mysterious response of the deities in Sringeri, who appeared as bearing arms and attacking the invader. The guru was soon informed that Bhairava had actually left the town.<sup>11</sup> He celebrated the occasion by composing the poems, *Ramachandrodaya*, *Guru Sataka*, and *Minaksi Sataka*.<sup>12</sup>

*Virabhadra Nayak (1629-45) and Sringeri*

On the occasion of his visit to Sringeri in 1680, as the guest of the guru, Virabhadra made over to the Acharya the matha built by Manavote Venkanna near the river at Pattaguppe, confirmed the grant of the village of Chavadi Settikoppa and a vritti for a feeding house, and granted in addition the village of Gorugude (Nagar taluk).<sup>13</sup> When the Sringeri authorities complained to Virabhadra that the Svami of Tirihahalli was displaying insignia to which he was not entitled, the Nayak stopped the unauthorised use, and in a letter to the Acharya of Sringeri wrote that the Jagadguru had

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11 See K. D. Swaminathan : '*The Nyakas of Ikkeri*', pp. 49-50.

12 G. V. K., X., Selection from *Minakshi sataka* have been published in the *Sri Sankara Kripa* (Tamil Edition) and *Guru Sataka* is awaiting publications.

13 M. A. R. 1933 no. 28.

authority to enforce obedience from other sanyasis<sup>14</sup> without having to appeal to the ruler.

The svami of the Kudli matha influenced the Bijapur authorities to put him in possession of the villages of Harakere and Mandali, Virabhadra wrote to the Bijapur officers, Khodayi Samal Khan, Adam Afzal Khan and Khan Ali Shah, that 'Sri Sacchidananda Bharati's possessions should not be disturbed.'<sup>15</sup>

*Sivappa Nayak's (1645-60) Services*

The next ruler Sivappa Nayak inquired into the mismanagement of the matha lands and took stern measures against those who had usurped the lands of the matha and evaded payment of dues, particularly in the Mangalore province. He issued orders to his officers to complete the construction of the Sadasiva temple in Vidyaranyapura, and in a letter to one Tirumala Bhatta, animadverted against the malversions going on for some years past in regard to temple services and the charities, negligence to keep the agrahara in a sanitary condition and failure to make fresh transcripts of old documents and manuscripts. Three unclaimed vrittis were re-allotted to scholars, one of them Kalahasti Sastri, by name, was from Tatiputtur in Madurai *sime*.<sup>16</sup> He got all unlawful emigrants who had gone to Karkala,<sup>17</sup> sent back to Sringeri, and granted to the matha lands in Holehonnur and other districts valued at more than

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14 *M. A. R.* 1916, p. 65. In this matha which was subordinate to Sringeri there was the temple of Sacchidananda, which was consecrated by a disciple of Sringeri matha and managed by him. (Mac. MSS. Madras Oriental MSS. Library, S. No. 1505). Virabhadra donated lands to this temple (*E. C.* VIII, Tl. 3). This temple enjoyed land grants made by the Sringeri Acharya (*MAR* 34 no. 51).

15 *MAR* 1916 p. 65.

16 *Sg. R.* 13 : *M. A. R.* 1916, pp. 61 ff. and 1925, No. 35. Now called Tadikombu (near Dindigul).

17 *Sg. R.* 14.

one hundred and twentytwo pagodas.<sup>18</sup> (1660-1). He handed over to Sringeri the lands of Narasimha Yogi of Sangama matha as a punishment for his intransigence towards the guru.

The Acharya got the irrigation sources repaired and provided with dams, and extended the area under areca plantation. Since the creation of the samsthanam in 1346, the Brahmans who held vrittis had been receiving fifty kandakas of paddy. When the tenants illicitly grew areca for their profit, the holders of vrittis (inamdars) did not get the usual supply of paddy. In response to a srimukha from the guru, Sivappa Nayak had the lands re-surveyed. The beriz was revised; the total beriz for the samsthanam was fixed at twelve thousand pagodas and the share of each inamdar, both of garden and of wet lands, was also defined; he was entitled to forty kandakas of paddy. This settlement (c. 1653-4) defined clearly the rights and liabilities of the tenants and the rates payable by them to the samsthanam and its inamdars, and invested the samsthanam with complete powers to collect the dues.<sup>19</sup> Vidyaranyapura agharam had fallen into decay and converted into areca gardens. The Nayak restored the agharam to the matha after compensating the affected parties.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Bhadrappa Nayak II (1662-4)*

Bhadrappa Nayak restored to the samstham the villages of Kerehalli and Gavaturu (1662) of an aggregated value of about four hundred and sixty pagodas, which had previously lapsed to the State.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Grants by other chiefs*

In 1625-6 Hanumappa Nayak of Tarikere placed the samsthanam in unobstructed enjoyment of Devapur and Dandur. Kanthirava Narasa Raja Wadeyar of Mysore presented to the Acharya costly images carved in precious stones.

In 1640, Randaula Khan, the Bijapur general, advanced as far as Mysore, and on the way captured Tarikere. Shaji, father of

18 Sg. R. 15.

19 Sg. R. 12: (Beriz—full revenue obtainable; Kandaka is a little over four bushels).

20 M. A. R. 1925 no. 35.

21 M. A. R. 1916, p. 67. Sg. R. 16



Sivaji, was second in command of the Bijapur army. He captured Ikkeri (1639) where upon Virabhadra Nayak surrendered half his territory and removed to Nagar or Bednur. In response to the Acharya's *srimumukha*, Randaula granted a *sanad* conveying 'his *salam* to the holy feet of the illustrious Paramahansa parivrajaka-acharya Sacchidananda Bharati' and the information that he had issued *takit* (orders) to his officers that the matha villages in Shimoga *sime*, that had been usurped by others, should be restored to the matha, and that they should enforce obedience to the Sringeri Svami's orders. He also promised further help whenever needed."<sup>22</sup>

*Installation of Sri Bhavani in the Malahani-  
karesvara Temple*

On his return from a visit to Bednur, the Acharya consecrated Goddess Bhavani in the Malahanikaresvara temple, and instituted festivals including a 'rathotsava' (car festival).

A passing mention may be made of a grant in 1661 by Sri Ranga Raya III who was then in Belur, of the villages of Surapura and Ranaghatta to Krishnananda Sarasvati of Mulvayi matha (Tirtahalli taluk), 'a worshipper of the lotus feet of Sri Sacchidananda mahayogindra'.<sup>23</sup> Surapur has since come into the possession of Sringeri.

26. *SRI NRSIMHA BHARATI V*  
(1663-1705)

*Somasekhara Nayak* (1664 - 75)

Somasekhara Nayak confirmed the grant of lands<sup>24</sup> of the value of three hundred pagodas in Erehalli village to be utilised for the worship of Sri Chandramaulisvara. The boundaries of these lands were resettled. He gave hundred pagodas to carry out repairs to the Sri Malahanikaresvara temple.

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22 *M. A. R.* 1934, no. 33. Also Sardesai: *New History of the Marathas* I p. 95.

23 Surapur grant. *M. A. R.* 1916, p. 63 and 1933, no. 29, also C. P. in Sringeri.

24 *M. A. R.* 1916, p. 67; *Sg. R.* 18.

*Channammaji ( 1671 - 96 )*

The Acharya visited Belur at the request of Rani Channammaji. Her minister provided an 'utsava vigraha' for the Sri Sringesvara temple in Kigga. When the Rani heard that duties were being collected from the sarvamanya villages in Mukkarnad, she issued orders cancelling them as irregular collections (1691-2) and instructed her officers not to collect duties on articles bought for the use of the matha.<sup>25</sup>

*Basavappa I ( 1696 - 1714 )*

Her successor Basavappa issued nirupas<sup>26</sup> to his officers (1697) directing them to help the Sringeri authorities in their enquiries regarding 'achara' and in the collection of dues in Barakur sime, Arvattagrahara sime, Kumbala sime Bhattakala Baggavadi, Gero-soppa, Sirali, Chandavara, Karkala, Basaruru, Sankaranarayana, Belatangadi, Mogaranadu, Gajanuru, Keladi, Danivasa, Kandya, Garaje, Gonibidu and Javanige.

*Somasekhara II ( 1714 - 39 )*

Somasekhara II gave further assistance in getting the orders of the matha carried out in the distant villages. He remitted some more duties, and his mother made an endowment for lamps in the temples.<sup>27</sup>

Mummadi Dodda Virappa Gauda, Chief of Yelahanka, granted to the matha, the village of Sigekuppe.<sup>28</sup>

The Acharya fed thousands of people during the great famine of *Aksaya*<sup>29</sup> (1686). He founded an agrahara which he named Sacchidanandapura after his guru, and also installed a linga named Sacchidanandesvara. He opened a chitrasala or gallery of paintings in the mandapa of the temple of Sri Sarada. The places he visited in his pilgrimage included Kollur famous for the temple of Sri Mukambika, Gokarna and Kotisvara.

25 M. A. R. 1916, p. 67, Sg. R. 18.

26 Sg. R. 20 and 21.

27 M. A. R. 1916, p. 68.

28 Ibid. p. 64.

29 G. V. K. XI.

27. *SRI SACCHIDANANDA BHARATI II*  
(1705 - 41)

*Pilgrimages*

Sri Sacchidananda Bharati honoured Basavappa by visiting his capital. He later visited Kigga and then went to Subrahmanya where his disciples took him in a procession despite the strong opposition of the local Madhvas. He then visited Velapura at the request of the Nayaka of the place. The Ballala chief of Nerenki (now Halenenki) then received him with honours. Then passing through Uppinangadi, he reached Nandavaram, the headquarters of a chief. After visiting the shrine of Manjesvara, he was entertained by the Chauta chiefs and the Ballala of Hebri in their capitals. He then camped for some time in his own matha at Haladi worshipping Sri Nrshimha installed there, and proceeded to Kotisvara, Barakura, Bhatkal, Honavar and Gokarna. A pirate-chief, presumably, the Siddi of Janijira, who pounced upon Gokarna to plunder the valuables of the matha, was disappointed to find that the Acharya had already left the place, and in chagrin plundered instead the inhabitants of the place. After visiting Sangama the Acharya halted at Benkipura, invited by Chief Hanuma. Pattabhirama, chief of Tarikere, invited him and presented him an elephant to carry the drums of the matha, and a large sum of money. Here the Moghal Commander-in-Chief in charge of the administration of Sira called on the Acharya, in his camp with costly presents.<sup>30</sup>

Sometime after returning to Sringeri, the Acharya set forth on another pilgrimage to Gokarna. On his way back he was entertained by the chiefs of Bilige and Banavase, and passed through Ikkeri, Sagar and Tirthahalli, and at the request of Somasekhara Nayak, spent some time in Bednur before returning to Sringeri.<sup>31</sup>

*Somasekhara II (1714 - 39) and*

*Basavappa II (1739 - 55)*

Somasekhara II liquidated the debts of the matha and visited Sringeri, and after he returned to his capital, his minister, a

30 G. V. K. XIV vv. 54-56.

31 The Acharya's pilgrimage is described in great detail in G. V. K. XIII to XVIII.



fanatical Vira Saiva, had two mathas of his faith established in the heart of Sringeri town much to the embarrassment of the Acharya, who thereupon went on another pilgrimage. The Svamis of the Madhva mathas in Udipi welcomed and entertained him. He then retired to Haladi. Peshwa Baji Rao, who was then campaigning in the Karnata country,<sup>32</sup> sent a message to the Nayak to have the Vira Saiva mathas in Sringeri removed, and the neighbouring Karnata chiefs also urged upon him to make it easy for the Acharya to return to Sringeri.<sup>33</sup> The Nayak issued orders for the removal of the mathas and the Acharya returned to Sringeri.

#### *Gifts from other Karnata Rulers*

Hanumappa Nayak of Santebennur restored the two villages of Danduru and Demapura (1720).<sup>34</sup> Krishna Raja Wodeyar II of Mysore sent from Srirangapatnam elephants, silk cloth and other offerings to the Acharya, whom he described as 'the ruler of the Yoga empire seated on the jewelled throne of Sringapura.' His officers in Belur made further offerings.<sup>35</sup> The Acharya founded a matha at Belur.

#### *The Maratha Ruling Houses and Sringeri*

The active association of the Maratha ruling houses with the Sringeri matha began during the reign of this pontiff. Raja Ram's son Sivaji II sent valuable presents to the Acharya,<sup>36</sup> and in 1738-9 Sambhu Chatrapati of the Kolhapur line sanctioned a grant of two hundred benas a year to the matha.<sup>37</sup> Peshwa Baji Rao's interest in the affairs of the matha has been stated above. In 1739-40 Balaji Rao Ballal Pradhan directed that the Sringeri matha should have first preference in socio-religious honours such as *agrapuja*.<sup>38</sup>

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32 His Chitaldurg and Srirangapatnam campaigns (1725-1727).

33 G. V. K. XVII, vv. 38, 45 and 48.

34 M. A. R. 1916, pp. 69-70.

35 *ibid*, p. 71 and 1933, no. 31.

36 G. V. K. XII, vv. 4-8.

37 Sg. R. 67.

38 *ibid*, 68.

The Acharya had a marked devotion to Sri Mahabalesvara of Gokarna and to Sri Mukambika of Kollur, who was also the tutelary deity of the Keladi Nayaks. His 'Mukambika stotra' in the tilting measures of the 'bhujangaprayata' metres and his 'Sarada stotra' commemorating a Navaratri celebration are two gems of poetry. He conducted festivals in the Sringeri temples on a lavish scale, to which, among other chiefs, the Setupati of Ramanathapuram also sent offerings. He had a linga, by name Vidyasamkara, installed in Ramesvaram.<sup>99</sup>

His last letter to Basavappa II written in 1739, conveyed the news of his illness and his eagerness to nominate a suitable successor.

Despite losses, the period was in the main one of consolidation achieved with the help of the Keladi Nayaks and other Karnata chiefs. The settlement of the lands, improvement in irrigation, growth of plantations and offerings from princes compensated for the losses. The wealth thus acquired was spent in works of charity, temple services and grants to scholars. Moghal chiefs and generals vied with the local chiefs in honouring the Acharyas for their learning and spiritual eminence.

The benign influence of 'the jewelled throne of Dharma' in Sringeri was shed on all alike. Visiting scholars were lavishly rewarded. By their personal conduct and teachings the Acharyas lessened the acerbities born of the conflict of contending philosophies and sects. The Keladi Nayaks, who by family tradition, were followers of the Saiva sect, accepted the message of Advaita. Venkatappa I received from the Sringeri guru, the title of *Vaidika-siddhanta-pratisthapaka*. Nothing illustrates better the powerful influence of the teachings of the Acharyas of Sringeri than the advice of Rani Channammaji to her adopted son Basavappa: '.....Tread not an unworthy path. Avoid acts of sin, practise noble deeds and meditate upon the feet of God. Be merciful and protect those that seek refuge. Do not revile others, practise self-restraint. Yield not to lust etc., that cause the cycle of birth and death. Fear not in adversity and exult not in prosperity. Meditate upon the basic principles of Dharma, and realise the truth of Advaita. Honour those who are proficient in the Vedic lore. Regard life as but a

dream and reflect on the question *who am I*.....Propitiate Siva to enjoy eternal bliss.<sup>40</sup>

Another record, dated 1561, inscribed under the orders of Krishnappa Nayak, a north Karnata chief, adverts to an essential doctrine of Advaita, the oneness of Siva and Vishnu. Here are excerpts. 'Obeisance to Ganapati and Sambu. Some say that there is no God other than Hari, while others assert that there is no God other than Hara ; to remove this conflict, Hari and Hara out of infinite grace assumed the glorious form of Harihara in Kudali (Harihar). May He protect us.....Obeisance to Him, the Lord of the three worlds, supreme, remover of the differences between the Saivas and Vaishnavas.....'<sup>41</sup>

Mark the spirit underlying a grant in 1571 to the Dvaita teacher and saint Sri Vadiraja tirtha for worship in the temple of Sri Krishna at Udipi in order that the donor Ramaraja Nayaka 'may obtain reunion with Siva.'<sup>42</sup>

And the pilgrimages of the Acharyas and the temple festivals. They afforded opportunity for all classes of people to approach the Jagadguru for guidance and instruction for their spiritual betterment.

Before closing this chapter, it is worthwhile emphasising that the samsthanam, the origin and growth of which have been traced in this and the two preceding chapters, was only an ancillary to the Sarada pitha, the primary aims of which it was meant to subserve. The resources of the samsthanam also helped to maintain yatis, sadhakas, learned men, temples, feeding houses and other charities.

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40 S. T. R. VIII, 8 ; Also *Nayaks of Ikkeri* p. 125.

41 E. C. XI, Dg. 18.

42 E. C. VIII, Sb. 55.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ERA OF LONG TOURS: MESSAGE OF BLESSINGS CARRIED ALL OVER THE LAND

Now begins the decline of the Keladi kingdom which was finally liquidated by Haidar Ali in 1763. The hegemony of the South Karnata country definitely passed to Mysore.

#### 28. SRI ABHINAVA SACCHIDANANDA BHARATI I (1741-67)

*Basavappa Nayak II ; and Virammaji*

When the new Svami ascended the Vyakhyana simhasana, Basavappa Nayak II was on the throne of Bednur. After him Channa Basavappa ruled for two years and was succeeded by Rani Virammaji. The Rani invited the Acharya to her capital, offered him a sphatika linga and image of Krishna set in rubies and lands valued at three hundred pagodas.<sup>1</sup>

*Krishna Raja Wadeyar II (1734-66)*

Krishna Raja Wadeyar II was then ruler of Mysore with his capital in Srirangapatnam. He invited the Acharya in the sure belief that the Acharya's presence in his State would bring in the much needed rains for the country, and granted Belavadi<sup>2</sup> and its hamlets, all worth twelve hundred pagodas.

He also issued a *rahadari* directing his officers to afford proper escort and supply provisions to the Acharya during his pilgrimage to Ramesvaram. His Government rendered the necessary help to the Sringeri samsthanam in the collection of dues and contributions, in the maintenance of order in the villages and in the *achara vicharas*. Lands granted to the samsthanam by private parties were also ordered to be treated as *sarvamanyam*.<sup>3</sup>

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1 KNV XII. Quoted in *Nayaks of Ikkeri*, p. 155

2 M. A. R. 1923 No. 6.

3 The letters that the Raja wrote to the Acharya were adorned with gold illumination. M. A. R. 1916, p. 72; 1920 pp. 41-44; also Sg. R. 32, 39 and 44.

### Other Rulers

Venkatadri Nayak of Belur sent offerings to the Acharya with the assurance that his officers would not interfere with the samsthanam villages situated within his territory.<sup>4</sup> Virappa Udeyar, ruler of Coorg, granted the village of Kodalimande<sup>6</sup> worth three hundred pagodas to defray the expenses of puja on the Vijayadasami day in the temples at Sringeri.

### Pilgrimage to Nasik

Balaji Baji Rao Pradhan, Peshwa (1740-61), sent from his camp on the banks of the Krishna valuable offerings to Sri Sarada and the Acharya.

Peshwa Madhava Rao Ballal Pradhan instituted an annual grant for *agrapuja* to the Jagadguru. In response to an invitation from the Peshwa's uncle Ragunatha Rao, the Acharya went to Poona in 1760-1. On that occasion Haidar Ali, who had become ruler of Mysore, wrote to the Acharya: "You are a great and holy personage. It is but meet that all should desire to pay respects to you, and I am happy you are responding to Ragunatha Rao's invitation." With further expression of respect and esteem, he sent the Acharya an escort of one elephant, five horses, a palanquin and five camels together with presents of gold and silk clothes, shawls, and ten thousand five hundred rupees for the expenses of the journey. From Poona, the Acharya went to Nasik, where he attained *videha mukti*. Peshwa Madhava Rao liquidated the debts that the Acharya had incurred during his stay in Nasik.

### 29. SRI NRSIMHA BHARATI VI (1767-70)

In 1766, Peshwa Madhava Rao and Nizam Ali were at war with Haidar. A brief respite helped Haidar to regain his lost territories. Notwithstanding troubles at home caused by Ragunatha Rao, the Peshwa again made war with Mysore, and both sides being exhausted, peace was concluded only in 1770. Under such circumstances

4 M. A. R. 1916, p. 70.

5 *ibid* p. 69; also 1933, no. 34. The grant was issued from the Chief's capital at Haleri.

6 *ibid* p. 73.

Sri Nrsimha Bharati VI could not take charge of the matha in Sringeri. Haidar, however, wrote assuring the Acharya that his officers would see to the proper maintenance of the charities and the protection of the samsthanam lands. The Acharya attained *vidcha mukti* in Nasik.

For about ten years, Nasik was the centre from which the Jagadguru propagated the message of Dharma. Between 1761 and 1772, Madhava Rao gradually enhanced the annual State grant to Sringeri matha from two hundred rupees to fifteen hundred rupees.<sup>7</sup>

### 30. SRI SACCHIDANANDA BHARATI III (1770 - 1814)

Haidar demonstrated his esteem for the new Jagadguru by issuing *nirupas*<sup>8</sup> (1780) to all officers directing them to render all assistance to the matha.

#### *Tipu*

Tipu, who succeeded Haidar, was opposed by the Marathas, the Nizam and the English. In the course of the campaigns of the 'Third Mysore War' (1790-2), Parasuram Bhau marched on Bednur. His hosts commanded by a Patwardhan foolishly plundered Sringeri, looted the temples and desecrated the holy shrine of Sarada (1791). The loot that was carried away was of the value of sixty lakhs of rupees. Brahman priests were killed in the affray. In a letter commiserating the Acharya,<sup>9</sup> Tipu wrote: 'People who sin against such a holy place will at no distant date suffer the consequences of their misdeeds. People do evil smiling, but will suffer the penalty in torments of agony; this adage will be fulfilled. Treachery to gurus will lead to all round ruin, destruction of all wealth and the ruin of the family'. He sent four hundred rahatis for the restoration of the temple and the reconsecration of the image of Sri Sarada together with a palanquin, elephants and clothes.<sup>10</sup>

7 Sg. R. 69 to 75.

8 M. A. R. 1916, p. 73. *Nirupa* is an order from a superior to his subordinates.

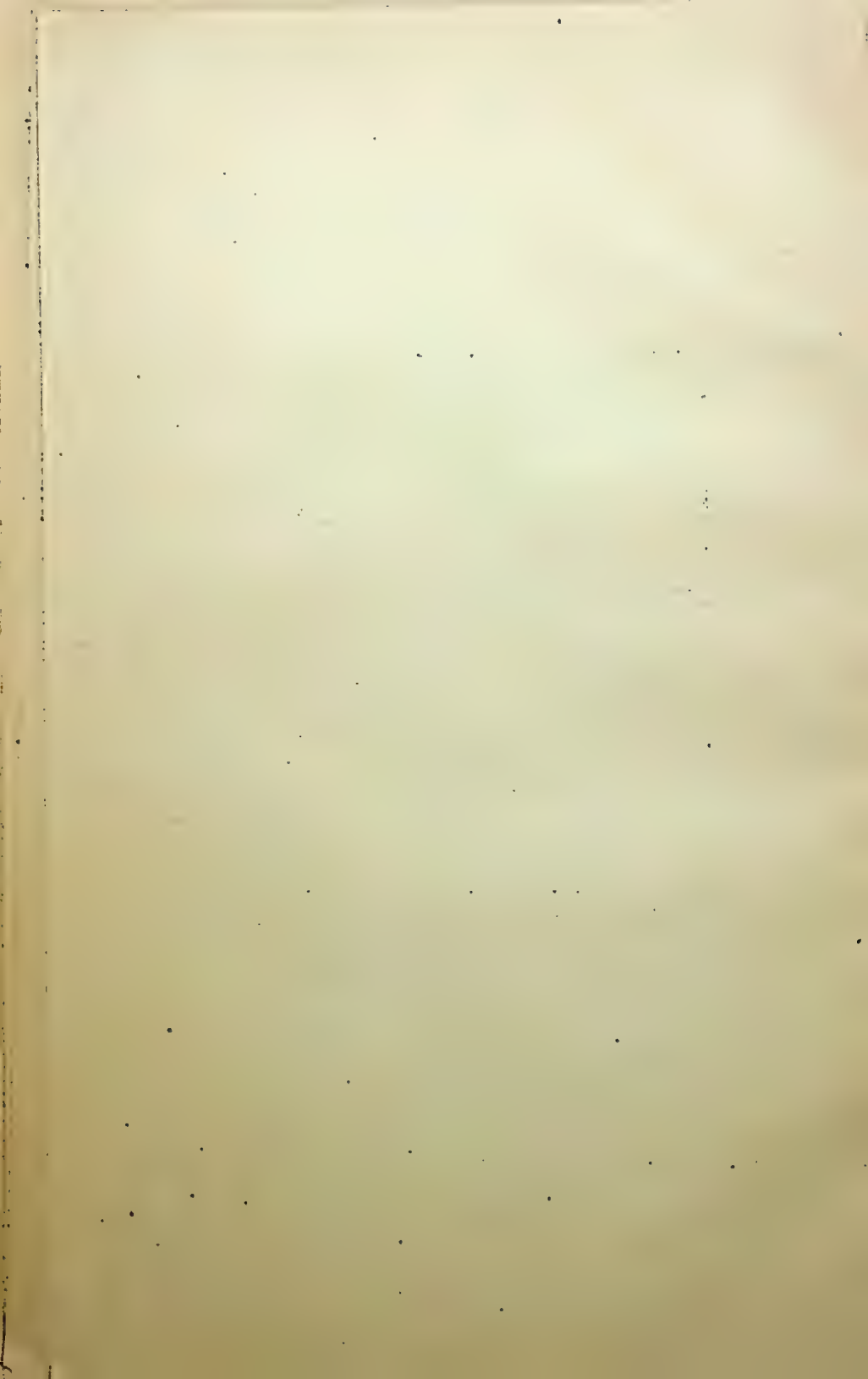
9 See also Sardesai: *New History of the Marathas I*.

10 Sg. R. 47 to 50 and 59. M. A. R. 1916, pp. 74-6.





**Sri Sacchidananda Bharati III**



On several occasions Tipu sought the blessings of the Acharya. He once wrote that he depended upon three sources of strength, God's grace, the Jagadguru's blessings and the strength of his arms.<sup>11</sup> He requested the Acharya to perform *Satachandi* and *Sahasārachandi japa* and *homa* saying, 'I have written to the asaf of Nagar to supply you all the materials required for the great yaga; Triambaka Rao of Nagar and the amildar of Koppa will camp at Sringeri to see to the necessary supplies of vessels, cloth, images (*pratimas*) etc. Kindly see that rituals are performed according to the prescribed rules, give liberal cash presents to Brahmans, and feed them in thousands every day.'<sup>12</sup> In a subsequent letter the Sultan acknowledged the miraculous effects of the yaga - how he was successful in his enterprise and how rains fell and the land yielded rich harvests.<sup>13</sup>

The Acharya decided to go to Poona to seek redress for the spoliation of the matha. Tipu invited him to Srirangapatnam before proceeding to Poona. Not having heard from the Acharya for a long time after he reached Poona, Tipu sent a rahadari with money for the Acharya's return journey, and in his letter expressed his conviction that wherever a godly personage like the Acharya stayed, there was sure to be prosperity.<sup>14</sup> He had already ordered the asaf of Nagar to attend to the proper conduct of the festivals and charities in Sringeri during the Acharya's absence. After returning to Sringeri the Acharya set out on a pilgrimage to Tirupati, and other holy places and Tipu sent a rahadari for it (1792). While the Acharya was at Kanchi, Tipu requested him to bless his charities to the temples there and the work of renovating the temples partly destroyed during his father's campaigns.

Tipu even desired to make a pilgrimage to Sringeri, but the desire was not fulfilled. Between 1791 and 1798 Tipu wrote twenty-nine letters to the Acharya, and every one of them breathed the high veneration he had for the latter.

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11 Sg. R. 65.

12 *ibid* 51 to 53.

13 *ibid* 66.

14 *ibid* 63; also M. A. R. 1916. pp. 74-6.



*Nizam Ali*

It is remarkable that Tipu's enemies also sought the blessings of the Acharya. Nizam-ul-Mulk, the founder of the Asaf Jahi dynasty in Hyderabad, evinced very high respect for the Sringeri Guru and issued several *farmans* and *sanads* conferring special privileges on the Math, which his son Nizam Ali Khan (1761-1803) confirmed in *sanads* dated 24. Rabiussani and 1. Jamadiulavval A. H. 1196 (8th and 16th April 1782). These *sanads* not only reaffirmed the previous grants but added further privileges. Nizam Ali Khan ordered that the property of disciples dying without heirs should vest in the matha—the matha, however, seldom enforced this right. The Guru was given authority over some temples in the dominion, and his agents were authorised to collect from both Hindu and Muslim religious and charitable endowments contributions at one anna in every rupee of their revenues. Annual payments of *nazar* and *nazarana* were continued and Hindus of all classes enjoined to offer puja and *kanikka* to the Guru through his representatives.<sup>15</sup>

*Maratha Rulers*

In 1782-3, Hindu Rao Ghorpade granted to the matha one hundred moyins a year, and in 1786-7 Daulat Rao Hindu Rao Ghorpade, the village of Timmanhatti.<sup>16</sup> In 1793-4 Mahadji Sinde who was on a visit to Poona, donated the village of Pimpalgat.<sup>17</sup> In 1800 Peshwa Baji Rao II<sup>18</sup> communicated his decision that agra puja should be paid to the Sringeri pitha in all religious assemblies and requested the Acharya to send representatives to his court to accept the same. He further declared himself a disciple of the matha; and a rahadari (1805) issued by the East India Company refers to the Sringeri Svami as the guru of Pandit Pradhan Peshwa Bahadur.

*Other Chiefs*

In 1785-6 Basavappa Nayak of Jugali (Anekal taluk) granted the village of Khasapura in Kottur *sime* (modern Bellary district) and Basavappa Nayak of Santebennur, the village of Basapura for expenses in the temples.<sup>19</sup> The Subrahmanyesvara temple in Sringeri

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15 *M. A. R.* 1916, p. 71.

16 *Sg. R.* 76 and 77.

17 *ibid* 78.

18 *M. A. R.* 1916, p. 71.

19 *ibid* p. 70.

was constructed about this time.<sup>20</sup> Chamaraja Wadeyar of Mysore conveyed his respects to the Acharya with presents of elephants and ornaments.

### *Regent Purnaiya*

After Tipu's death, the rightful sovereign Krishna Raja Wadeyar III was placed on the throne. During his minority (1799-1811) Diwan Purnaiya carried on the administration as Regent. There is an interesting tradition regarding this minister. A Madhva Brahman by birth, Purnaiya had a prejudice against Advaitins and their Acharyas. He thought that the Sringeri Acharya was leading a life of indolence in the midst of plenty and waited for an opportunity to bring about his discomfiture. When the Acharya was in the capital as the guest of the Sultan, he proposed a polemical contest between the Acharya and the ablest of the Pandits in Mysore. The Acharya accepted the challenge on condition that a curtain was laid between him and all the others assembled. Discussions began and soon reached a high intellectual level. To Purnaiya it appeared that he heard the voice of a woman from behind the curtain. Unable to restrain his curiosity, he slightly pushed aside the curtain and peeped in. What a wonderful vision he had! He saw the figure of Sri Sarada discoursing, and slowly it transformed itself into that of the Acharya. He fell at the Acharya's feet praying for pardon, and vowed to serve him to the best of his ability. And well indeed did he serve the Acharya when as Regent of Mysore he was in the plenitude of his power.

Thirty-eight letters <sup>21</sup> written by the Regent to the Acharya are on record; and they, as usual with all royal correspondence in Kannada to the Acharya, end with the subscription *intibinnaha* ('such is the respectful submission'). During the famine of 1803 the Regent requested the Acharya to arrange for the performance of japas and special abhishekam, and later expressed gratitude at the fall of rains as the result of the Acharya's prayers to God Malahanikaresvara.<sup>22</sup>

20 *ibid* p. 84.

21 *ibid* pp. 76 ff; also Sg. R. 92-108.

22 To this day it is the practice in Sringeri to perform abhishekam and special puja to Sri Malahanikaresvara to ward off threatened drought, and the result has always been efficacious.

In 1805, the Acharya was on a pilgrimage for which the Regent afforded all facilities. While at Madras, he saw the Governor.<sup>23</sup> After visiting Tirupati, Kanchi, Kalahasti, Madurai, Ramesvaram, Trivandrum and other holy places, he went to Srirangapatnam and returned to Sringeri by way of Bangalore.

The Regent strictly enforced on his officers the duty of seeing that the rights and privileges of the Acharya and the samsthanam were respected. They were told to apprehend ryots and servants of the samsthanam, guilty of misdemeanour, and send them back to Sringeri for punishment. An officious amildar of Koppa, who interfered in the affairs of the samsthanam, was curtly ordered 'not to have anything to do with the ryots of Sringeri and to return to his taluk at once.' Haidar and Tipu had conceded the right of the samsthanam authorities to take cognizance of and punish, in accordance with the *smṛti* codes, Brahmans guilty of such offences as theft of gold and drunkenness. This and other powers of the samsthanam were scrupulously protected.

The Regent held that no other Svami could be taken out in *adda palaki* and sent through the amildar of Koppa a stern warning (1807) to a wealthy merchant Heccha Timmayya against instigating the Svami of Hariharapura matha to be carried in *adda palaki* or assume any insignia he was not entitled to.<sup>24</sup> Sivaganga matha, he declared, should always come after Sringeri matha in receiving contributions from disciples.<sup>25</sup> The Puttige Svami at Tirthahalli meddled with the affairs of the Haiga matha, which resulted in the death of the agent of the latter. Purnaiya instructed his amildar at Kavaledurga to bring home to the Puttige Svami the illegality and highhandedness of his action, and intimated that in regard to the Haiga matha and all other mathas subordinate to Sringeri, the Sringeri Jagadguru alone could issue the necessary orders (1810).

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23 Sg. R. 95. The East India Company issued a rahadari and provided an armed retinue for the Acharya's safety with instructions to officers to offer all facilities for the Acharya's pilgrimage.

24 *ibid* 99, 100.

25 *ibid* 97.



The Jagadguru enforced in the samsthanam the order of the Regent controlling usury and directing that no higher interest than one varaha per month on hundred varahas could be levied. Merchants who disobeyed this order were punished with attachment of their property.

In 1811, Regent Purnaiya handed over the reins of Government to Maharaja Krishna Raja Wodeyar III on his attaining the age of majority. The Maharaja lost no time in extending a respectful invitation to the Acharya to visit his capital. While in Mysore, the Acharya desired to go to Nanjangud to worship Sri Srikanthesvara, but the Svami of the Sumatindra matha, who was then there, objected to the Sringeri Svami passing in front of his lodging. There was no other route to the temple. The Maharaja tactfully invited the Svami of the Sumatindra matha to Mysore, and the Sringeri Acharya visited the Nanjangud temple without obstruction.<sup>26</sup>

The Acharya then went to Harakeri, which in 1812 the Maharaja had declared a sarvamanyam village belonging to the Sringeri samsthanam, for the *chaturmasya* vows for the year, and there cast off his mortal body. Thus passed away from this world an eminent sage, whose spiritual greatness commanded the veneration of the Muslim and Hindu rulers of Mysore, Peshwas Madhava Rao and Baji Rao II, Mahadji Sinde, Nizam Ali Khan, and last but not least the governors of the East India Company.

### 31. SRI ABHINAVA SACCHIDANANDA BHARATI II (1814-7)

This was a short reign of three years. The Maharaja wrote to the Agent Venkatachala Bhatta: 'the Spiritual Throne of Sringeri being pre-eminent and the Svami new to his charge, he should manage its temporal affairs in such a way as to safeguard its property and maintain its prestige'—another proof of the Maharaja's solicitude for this 'pre-eminent spiritual throne.'

When the Svami felt his end was approaching, he ordained a young Brahmachari, a native of Sringeri agrahara, and six days later passed away.

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid* 110.

### 32. SRI NRSIMHA BHARATI VII (1817-1879)

Sri Nrsimha Bharati was born in 1798. Even as a boy, he had walked all the way to Kasi to learn the Sastras from learned Pandits, among whom was Vanchesvara Sastri a disciple of Chintamani Kutti Suri, a disciple of the renowned Ahobila Pandita. After assuming the headship of the pitha, the Acharya strenuously applied himself to securing high proficiency in several branches of learning, besides mastering the details of the administration of the matha. In the affairs of the samsthanam, he brought order where there was confusion. He conquered hunger and sleep. When he was hardly fifty years of age, he gave up normal food, and subsisted on a handful of boiled *pagal* (*Momordica charantia*). He spent practically the whole day in meditation and puja. While he was in Bangalore in 1858, Commissioner Bowring, who had heard of the austere and godly life of the Acharya, wished to see for himself the truth of the reports, and one day at one A.M., he went incognito to the Acharya's camp and slightly drew aside the curtain in front of the puja hall. Oblivious of what was happening around and with his head bent down, the Acharya was offering flowers to Chandramaulisvara. The Commissioner contemplated on the spectacle with reverence and wonder. His letters to the Acharya are eloquent expressions of his esteem.

The Acharya was proficient in Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Marathi, and Hindustani, and it is needless to mention his mastery of Samskrit. This made it easy for disciples from all over India to approach him with their personal problems and receive his guidance.

His was an indomitable will, and he never swerved from any decision he had taken. Never aggressive, never impatient, he gently set about working till his purpose was accomplished. From constant meditation on God Nrsimha, his mien assumed a character of stern sublimity and struck awe and reverence in the minds of those who approached him. His heart, however, was very tender and would easily melt at the sight of distress.

A few instances of the Acharya's trait of firmness and purposefulness may be recalled. In the course of his northern tour, he approached Nagpur. The Bhosle Raja, who was plunged in



Sri Nrsimha Bharati VII





luxury and idleness, showed disrespect to the matha. Though the Acharya had little regard for personal show and prestige, he could not put up with an affront to the pitha he represented. He fixed his camp in Kampti and stayed there for several months at considerable expense to the matha, awaiting the time when the Raja would show penitence. During this time the Raja met with unexpected troubles, and realising it was all due to his misconduct towards the sage, walked to the Acharya's camp, sought his pardon and escorted him to his capital.

During his stay in Ramesvaram in 1838, the Acharya was accommodated within the temple enclosure. The pilgrim to Ramesvaram bathes in the sacred wells within the temple and finishes by bathing in a well called Koti tirtha. The keepers of this well draw water in buckets and pour it over the head of the pilgrim. The Acharya wished that his attendants should draw water for his use. This the keepers did not permit. The Acharya went to another well, Sarva tirtha, finished his ablutions with its water and said to the assembled disciples that their pilgrimage would be complete if they bathed in the water of the Sarva tirtha. Thereafter pilgrims forsook the Koti tirtha, which became filthy, and the keepers lost their emoluments. When in 1872 the Acharya came to Madurai on his next tour, the keepers approached him and implored forgiveness. The Acharya went to Ramesvaram in 1873, got the well drained and poured water sanctified by him into it, and thereafter the tirtha was resorted to by pilgrims.

During the second visit to Madurai, the Acharya was accompanied by his young disciple, his successor-designate. The junior Acharya wanted to enter the sanctum of Goddess Minakshi to offer worship, which the officiating priests—bhattars they are called—did not permit. The Acharya went to the temple, had two cocoanut fruits brought and invoking the Divine Presence of the Goddess on them, offered worship to them. Thereafter worshippers, who went to the temple, dispensed with the services of the bhattars and themselves made the offerings at the threshold. A leading lawyer of Madurai, S. Subrahmanya Aiyar, who later adorned the Madras High Court Bench as Chief Justice, was the first to do this, and others followed. The bhattars, who in consequence, suffered privation went to the Acharya's camp and begged him to restore the

former practice. The Acharya came once more to Madurai at their request, and transferred back the Divine Presence to the murti in the shrine, and people, thenceforth, made their offerings in the customary way.

### *Krishna Raja Wadeyar III*

Maharaja Krishna Raja Wadeyar invited the Acharya to Mysore in 1822, but the latter, who was then in Harakeri went directly to Sringeri. The visit took place in 1828, and in honour of the event, the Maharaja renewed the sanad of the grant of Belavadi,<sup>27</sup> which had been formerly ceded in 1760, but had not come into the possession of the matha. To this village, he added Sirakaradi in Koppa taluk and Andavalli in Chandragutti taluk, altogether fourteen villages with eight hamlets attached to them. The Maharaja confirmed the right of the matha to own and cut sandalwood trees in the sarvamanyam lands, and issued several orders to amildars to exempt articles brought to the matha from taxes<sup>28</sup> and to enforce the disciplinary action taken by the matha against wrongdoers. Palace servants also were brought under the jurisdiction of the matha in the matter of *achara vichara*. He further confirmed the right of the matha to the property of disciples who died without heirs, subject to the limit of the value of a thousand rupees; and if the value exceeded the limit, the permission of the Government had to be obtained.<sup>29</sup> An order dated 1826 modified the prevailing practice of including fallen women of the families of disciples among the items of special *charadaya* of the Government and directed that these unfortunate women should be handed over to the matha to be reclaimed and reformed so that they might lead decent lives.<sup>30</sup> This is an event of tremendous social importance. Civil suits, such as those relating to partitions of property among the disciples, were referred to the matha.<sup>31</sup>

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27 *M. A. R.* 1916, p. 79; also *Sg. R.* 136-9.

28 *Sg. R.* 141, 142, 144.

29 *ibid*, 128.

30 *ibid*, 129. *Charadaya* is income from the sale of unowned living creatures.

31 *ibid*, 130.



The Maharaja zealously upheld the primacy and prestige of the Sringeri pitha by forbidding Svamis of the minor mathas to use unauthorised insignia such as *svetacchatra* and *makaratorana*, and directing the Svamis of Hariharapura, Tirthahalli and Mulabagal mathas, and such others as were subordinate to Sringeri, to be guided by the instructions that the Sringeri matha might issue<sup>32</sup> (1828).

Three records dated 1841, 1843 and 1847 relate to communications<sup>33</sup> addressed to the Sringeri Acharya by Sri Abhinavoddanda Gangadhara Bharati, Svami of Sivaganga matha, who on account of age was unable to manage his matha, and, not satisfied with the conduct of his disciple, the successor-designate, requested Sri Nrsimha Bharati to nominate a suitable Svami for his matha and train him properly.

Other communications from the Maharaja refer to presents of costly jewels, silver and gold vessels, golden palanquins to the deities in Sringeri, and a car for the Sri Sarada temple. The Svami had a car made for the temple in Chamarajanagar, and at the request of the Maharaja sent a Sri Chakra to be installed under the pedestal of the Goddess Prasanna Parvati in the Jnananandesvara temple on the Manikarnika near Srirangapatnam. One particular document, though not of much importance, reflects the Maharaja's consideration for the feelings of the Acharya. The palace purohit, who was attending to the matha post of achara-vivahara, found it difficult to discharge his duties both to the palace and the matha. In suggesting the appointment of a special officer for the work of the matha, the Maharaja requested the Acharya 'not to suppose that his order was wilfully disregarded by his chief disciple'<sup>34</sup> (as the Maharaja described himself.)'

A bakshi, who as faujdar of Nagar, had been guilty of fraud and embezzlement, abetted the seditious proceedings of a base pretender to the throne of Nagar (Bednur) and fanned an insurrection (1830-1) which spread as far as Bangalore. The State forces and the subsidiary troops were sent to put down the revolt. In the

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32 *ibid*, 134; also *M. A. R.* 1916, p. 82.

33 *M. A. R.* 1916, p. 85.

34 *ibid*, p. 81.

midst of all his pre-occupations, the Maharaja, ever mindful of the safety of Sringeri, ordered his diwan to see to the protection of the matha and sent a biradari of horsemen to guard the matha till quiet was restored.

Alleging on dubious grounds misrule against the Maharaja, Governor-General Bentinck placed Mysore under the administration of British Commissioners (1831). The commissioners, however, took a very helpful and sympathetic interest in the affairs of Sringeri. Mark Cubbon declared in 1837-8 that no appeal would lie to Government against orders passed by the matha,<sup>35</sup> and also decided that revenue returns need not be submitted to Government by the authorities of the samsthanam, which could freely exercise its time-honoured privileges, such as exemptions from taxes, enforcement of law and order within its limits and the right to inquire into civil suits.<sup>36</sup> An official memorandum of the Chief Commissioner,<sup>37</sup> after stating that 'the Inams of Sringeri matha consist of (i) the Sringeri cusbah and dependent villages and hamlets, known as the Sringeri Magani, (ii) inam villages in other taluks, and (iii) minor inams in Government villages, records that the Chief Commissioner has informed the Agent (of the matha) (1) that no. (iii) must be surveyed, and treated like the Government lands around them; (2) that it is very desirable that no. (ii) should be surveyed, but that the measure would not involve any interference with the existing rates of assessment therein and that it would not, however, be put into execution without the guru's consent, which the Chief Commissioner trusts will be given to its adoption; and (3) that no. (i) will not in any way be interfered with except as regards the laying down of the outer boundary of the Magani which must be done in surveying the adjoining villages. In communicating the above, the undersigned is directed to convey the assurance of the Chief Commissioner's sincere wish to consult, and if possible, meet the wishes of the venerable Guru in this, and all other matters connected with the property of the Mutt.'

The Maharaja expressed in a letter to the Acharya in 1834, the poignancy of his feelings at the turn of affairs. He wrote several

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35 *Sg. R.* 179.

36 *ibid.* 181 and 182.

37 dated Nandidoerg, 18/19 April 1872.

letters to the Acharya's camps in the north requesting his return to Mysore and offering to defray the expenses of the return journey. He kept the Acharya informed of the several auspicious events in the palace. In 1854, the Acharya paid his second visit to Mysore, and initiated the Maharaja into the study of the *Siva Gita*; on that occasion the latter announced an annual grant of twelve thousand rupees to the matha. In 1861, the Maharaja visited Sringeri.

### *Northern Tour*

Soon after Mysore was taken under British administration, the Acharya went on a long tour of pilgrimage to the north. Collector Alexander Nisbet welcomed the Acharya at Dharwar, and provided him with considerable escort 'during his pilgrimage to Nasik, Dwaraka, Kurukshetra, Kasi, Badarikasrama, Jagannath, etc.' (1842).<sup>38</sup>

The visit to Hyderabad State, which extended over three years, was marked by unprecedented manifestations of enthusiasm and esteem for the Acharya's high position and spiritual attainments. The first proclamation issued by the Nizam's prime minister referred to the 'auspicious tour' (*savari mubarak*) "of the most holy personage who could dispense blessings from where he stayed, but in the fullness of his grace had condescended to tour the kingdom of Hyderabad." The head of a Karnataka Matha at Kudli, one of the several *soi-disant Jagadgurus*, contested the right of Sringeri Guru to special insignias but the Government of the Nizam answered by issuing a series of proclamations containing *takids* to all Jagirdars, Deshmukhs, Deshpandes, Patels etc., in the Subhas of the Deccan to prohibit all other Mathadhipathis from displaying *mahabirudavalis* (insignias of high honour) and touring the dominion to collect *kanikkas*. These documents which were written in Persian with Marathi and Kannada translation in the *daftars* of the Subhas, were dated 2 *Ramzan* 1259 (16 October 1843), 2 *Rabiulavval* 1261 (11 March 1845) and 7 & 16 *Zilkath* 1261 (8 & 16 December 1845).

The Sringeri Matha was represented in Hyderabad by two agents under whom were *Pranth Dharmadhikaris* whose duty was to collect *nazarana* during wedding ceremonies, *diparadhana kanikkas*,



*prayaschitta* payments etc. The nature and amount of these collections were prescribed by *sanads* issued by the Nizam. The decision of the matha *Dharmadhikari* in caste disputes and cases of lapses from the spiritual and moral codes (*smritis*) were enforced by the Sircar officers.<sup>39</sup> The quasi-judicial authority exercised by the representatives of the Matha has since fallen into desuetude.

The Acharya's progress through the North Indian States was marked by demonstrations of respect and devotion. The Gackwad of Baroda issued a *ruhadari* to help the progress of the Acharya's party. Annual cash contributions and offerings to the matha were promised by Jayaji Rao Sinde of Gwalior (1853), Tukoji Rao Holkar of Indore (1848-9), Jaswant Rao Pawar and Haibat Rao Pawar of Dhar, Shaji Raja Bhosle of Akalkot, Bhaskar Rao Dadaji Sachiv of Nargund and Narasinga Rao Sitole, Deshmukh.<sup>40</sup> (1849) Rukmangada Rao of Pawar of Dewas (1849) and Raja of Cutch (1851). The Acharya performed the *Chaturmasya* of 1855 at Bhavnagar.

#### *Choice of a Successor*

When the Acharya returned to Sringeri after his northern tour, he was sixty years old, and it occurred to him that he should nominate his successor and give him suitable training. For eight years he searched for a suitable nominee, and at last fixing his mind upon a promising boy, he came to Mysore. The boy, Sivasvami, an orphan, was under the guardianship of his brother Lakshmi Narasimha Sastri, a pandit at the court of Mysore. Lakshmi Narasimha was loath to part with the boy, and it needed a lot of persuasion and a mild threat from the Acharya and the Maharaja before he consented to hand over his brother to the Acharya. Young Sivasvami was admitted into the Sanyasa asrama under the name of Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati Svami. The formal installation of the junior Acharya was attended by the Maharaja and the Chief Commissioner.

#### *Second Tour in the South*

The Jagadguru and the young Svami then started on another extended tour. Leaving Srirangapatnam, they visited Nanjangud and Chamaraajanagar, and then toured the districts of Coimbatore,

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39 *M. A. R.* 1916, p. 71.

40 *Sg. R.* 79 to 89.

Salem, Tiruchirapalli, Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Trivandrum, Chingleput, Madras, North Arcot, Cuddapah and Kurnool. During this tour, which lasted twelve years, the Mysore, Madras and India Governments had made proper arrangements for the reception of the Acharyas and providing escort suitable to their position. In a memorandum<sup>41</sup> Commissioner Bowring desired all officers 'to afford the Guru all requisite aid' and direct their subordinates 'to receive him with becoming attention,' and further said that 'the Guru as the Head of the Smartha Faith has always been treated with *peculiar honours enjoyed by no other spiritual preceptor.*' In a letter to the Government of India,<sup>42</sup> the Commissioner observed, 'The Sringeri Guru is the acknowledged Spiritual Director, not only of the greater proportions of the Hindus of Southern India, but also of those leading Maharatta Houses, such as Holkar and the former Peshwas. It may be said that *his influence is far greater than that of any Spiritual Guide in India*, and I presume it is for this reason that he is regarded with such unlimited respect.....The Guru Nursingh Bharati is a venerable old man of 72, who has been a great traveller and has a considerable reputation for learning. He is deservedly respected, being very unassuming in manner and having a well-established character for benevolence and wisdom.'

During these twelve years, the Jagadguru had made all arrangements for the suitable training of his successor. He returned to Sringeri in 1877 and entered mahasamadhi in 1879. Before he cast off his mortal body, he had in mind a pilgrimage to the shrine of Sri Mahabalesvara in Gokarna. At the time of his passing away, he was heard to murmur, 'get the palanquin ready so that I may hasten to the feet of Lord Mahabalesvara.' A little later he murmured again, 'how clever are our bearers; they have taken me to Gokarna and back in such a short time': Mark the coincidence. Just at that hour, the agent of the Sringeri samsthanam in Gokarna saw in a dream-vision the Jagadguru entering the shrine and offering worship. Is there anything that a Yogin cannot do, a Yogin whose Ego-consciousness is one with Cosmic consciousness, whose mind is one with the Cosmic mind?

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41 Dated Bangalore, 20th December 1867.

42 General No. 2396-101 of 1868-9, Dated Bangalore 27th July 1868—italics ours.

The period of more than a century and a half covered by this chapter witnessed wars, mutinies, the rise and fall of States, depredations and famines. In such a period, Muslim Rulers hailed the Sringeri guru as their saviour and guide. Hindu Rulers called themselves his chief disciples and hastened to offer *agra puja*; Indian States and British Provinces supplied biradaris of silledars—all these are certainly a measure of the extraordinary prestige of the Guru which was acknowledged all over India. This is not, however, the whole picture. Millions of humble folk got the opportunity of seeing the great Guru, and felt their lives sanctified. It is on record that in the South Maratha country a band of thugs, who came to plunder Sri Nrsimha Bharati's camp after nightfall, became his disciples under the influence of his words, and guided him and his party through the jungle. To the longing and harassed souls of millions from the Himalayas to Ramesvaram his benediction came as a soothing balm.



## CHAPTER NINE

### THE RE-DESCENT OF SAMKARA

#### 33. *SRI SACCHIDANANDA SIVA ABHINAVA* *NRSIMHA BHARATI* (1879-1912)

##### *Parentage*

Kunikal Rama Sastri was laureate among the court pandits of Maharaja Krishna Raja Wodeyar III of Mysore. An erudite scholar, who wrote the *Satakoti*, a standard work in Nyaya, he was held in high esteem all over the country. His eldest son Lakshmi Narasimha Sastri succeeded him as court pandit, and wrote the *Satakotimandana* in defence of his father's work against attacks of jealous critics. His third son Sivasvami was born in 1858 (*Pingala, Phalguna Ba 11*). Even as a child he lisped words of divine praise. He lost his father in his second year, and his mother in his fifth; and was brought up and educated by his brother. In 1866, Sri Nrsimha Bharati Svami ordained him under the dikhsa name of Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati. The young sanyasin, eight years old, was fatigued at the end of all the daylong rites of ordination and when he was put to rest, much to the wonder of his guru, he murmured in his sleep, *sarvoham, sarvoham*, manifesting the spiritual potentiality that lay in store for him.

##### *First Tour*

After the formal installation the two Acharyas started on a tour. After visiting Srirangapatnam, Nanjangud and Chamarajanagar, they toured the districts of Coimbatore, Salem, Tiruchirapalli, Madurai (then including Ramanathapuram), Tirunelveli, Trivandrum, Chingleput, North Arcot, Madras, Cuddapah and Kurnool, and returned to Sringeri in 1877. During the twelve years the tour lasted, the education and training of the young Acharya were completed under the personal care of the senior guru. On Sri Nrsimha Bharati Svami attaining *mahasamadhi*, Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati ascended the *Vyakhyana simhasana* of the Sarada pitha as thirty-third in a postolic succession.

### *Second Tour (to the North)*

The first six years of his incumbency were spent in constant puja and in yogic exercises, in which he soon attained perfection. He was in constant spiritual communion with his guru, and this gave him the necessary inspiration and sustaining faith.

Anna Saheb, a wealthy Jaghirdar, who had recently provided the vimanam of Sri Vidyasamkara temple with gold pinnacles, requested the Acharya to visit the Deccan to which the latter agreed, and started on the tour in February 1886. He first went to Gokarna to worship at the shrine of Sri Mahabalesvara, who was in the last thoughts of his guru. He then visited Jamkhandi at the pressing invitation of the chief, Ramachandra Patwardhan, who presented a diamond necklace and offered to meet the expenses of one of the festivals in Sringeri. Visiting one place after another the Acharya reached Kolhapur, where the Svami of the local matha received him with due respect. The Acharya did not proceed beyond Poona, and started on his return journey. In Bellary, the Lingayats, who first objected to the Acharya being taken in procession, were so overwhelmed by his inspiring presence and charm of expression that they withdrew all their objections, and the procession passed without a hitch. After about four years of absence, the Acharya returned to Sringeri in 1890.

### *Third Tour (to the South)*

Life in Sringeri for the next two years was a quiet one for the Acharya, who daily gave lessons in advanced works on Vedanta. Maharaja Chamaraja Wadeyar sent a pressing invitation, which the Acharya accepted. He went to Mysore in 1891. There he held the annual sadas of pandits during the Ganapati puja festival, in which the most celebrated scholars of South India participated. The Maharaja attended many of the evening discourses. After visiting Nanjangud, the Acharya went to the source of the Kaveri in Coorg. Satyamangalam and Gobichettipalayam were then visited; in the latter town the Acharya consecrated and installed the murti of Sri Subrahmanya in a temple built by a wealthy resident of the place. He then visited the agraharams on the banks of the Kaveri, and at Aiyampalayam laid the foundation of the Sri Dandapani temple at

the request of a wealthy mirasdar. Then to Kadattur, from where he went to Palni, Madurai and Ramesvaram. During the *navaratri*, which he celebrated in Ramanathapuram at the earnest solicitation of the Raja, he stopped the gruesome form of worshipping the Goddess by sacrificing sheep, and installed within the palace enclosure Sri Raja Rajesvari and a Sri Chakra, and arranged for the daily puja according to Vaidik rites, for which the Raja set apart a village yielding an annual revenue of twelve thousand rupees. The Raja further offered to the matha five villages in his zamin. He then visited Koilur near Karaikudi, which is the seat of an Advaita matha conducted by the Nagarattars (Nattukkottai Chettiyars), and several other towns in the Chettinad. The Nagarattars gave him rupees thirty thousand towards the renovation of the temple of Sri Sarada in Sringeri. There he heard the news of the death of Maharaja Chamaraja Wadeyar which much distressed him.

Proceeding to Tirunelveli, he visited Banatirtha, the source of the Tamraparni, where the Zamindar of Singampatti entertained him. On the return journey he installed Sri Dandapani, Sri Prasanna Paramesvara, Sri Prasanna Parvati and Sri Srinivasa in the temple which Mirasdar Tandavaraya Pillai had built at Aiyampalayam (April 1895). At Bangalore he received an invitation from the Maharani Regent, and went to Mysore to console her and bless the young princes. He initiated the Maharani into some mantras and the daily puja of Siva. He returned to Sringeri in 1895.

With the help and blessings of the Jagadguru and the co-operation of Raju Sastri and other descendants of Sri Appayya Dikshita, a devout yati, Svami Mahadevendra Sarasvati of the Upanishad Braharendra matha at Kanchi got the Minakshi Sundaresvara temple (near Vellore), associated with the sacred memory of the Dikshita, renovated, performed the *kumbhabhishekam* and arranged for regular daily worship (1892).

It may be recorded here that in 1894-5, the Government of the Maharaja Sinde of Gwalior communicated their decision that in that State the Sringeri matha should be given precedence over the Sankesvar matha.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Sg. R. 91. Communicated by the Secretary, Council of Regency.



### *Revenue Affairs*

The affairs of the samsthanam called for attention. About the year 1800, Brahmadayam and Devadayam inams distributed by the Jagadguru constituted two-thirds of the total area. With the passage of time, lands were alienated in a manner that defeated the purpose of the grants. Many of the alienations were unauthorised. Some Devadayam lands had passed out of the control of the samsthanam. The Acharya requested the Maharaja to help him to set right this lamentable state of affairs. Diwan Seshadri Aiyar took up the matter; the titles were scrutinized, lands unjustly alienated were restored and the rights of the inamdars, tenants and the samsthanam were defined (1897). This settlement, followed up with careful supervision, resulted in the enhancement of the annual revenue from sixty thousand to one hundred and thirty thousand rupees; the lands granted by the Setupati in Ramanathapuram yielded eight thousand rupees.

Soon after he returned to Sringeri, he established the *Sad Vidyasanjivini* providing for studies in the Vedas and the Sastras. He himself taught Vedanta to some advanced students.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya deputed one of his friends to invite the Acharya to Varanasi to lay the foundation-stone of the Hindu University. The Acharya regretted his inability to proceed to Varanasi at such short notice, and instead sent a pair of his guru's sandals, which, he said, would impart greater blessings to the enterprise than he could ever do.

The Jagadguru's mind was set on retirement and tapasya. He had a portion of the jungle to the south of the river cleared and an asrama put up in the clearing, which he named *Narasimhavana* after his guru. He lived there for most of the year, visiting Sri Sarada's shrine on Fridays; but the *chaturmasya* months, he spent in the matha buildings. Maharaja Krishna Raja Wodeyar with his brother and his tutor Fraser came to Sringeri in 1898 to obtain the guru's blessings before assuming the reins of administration. He repeated the visit in 1901.

*Means of combating the spread of Materialism. Desire to bring about the 're-descent of the spirit of Sri Samkara'*

The need to take effective steps to counteract the spread of irreligion and materialism and indifference, if not opposition, to the

age-long spiritual and moral codes was very prominent in his mind. Centuries ago, when there was spiritual chaos in the land, Sri Samkara incarnated and revived the dharma of the land. The Acharya longed for another descent of the Spirit of the Master for which purpose he felt it necessary to build a shrine at the birthplace of Sri Samkara, and make it a great centre of pilgrimage to radiate spiritual influence all over the land.

As a first step he instituted the annual festival—Sri Samkara Jayanti—a five day festival in April–May in honour of the great Master's birthday.<sup>2</sup>

Diwan Seshadri Aiyar succeeded in discovering the site of the ancient agrahara in Kalady (Kalati), the birthplace of Sri Samkara. The Acharya deputed the learned Nadukaveri Srinivasa Sastri to go to the place every year and conduct the festival. In 1905 the Acharya sent his agent Srikantha Sastri and A. Ramachandra Aiyar, a retired Judge of the High Courts of Travancore and Mysore, to acquire with the help of the Travancore Government the land about Kalady. 'The pious and highminded Maharaja Rama Varma (popularly called Sri Mulam Tirunal) and his Divan V. P. Madhava Rao readily fell in with the proposal. The Maharaja introduced in the State as Law, the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1904 for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments, and in pursuance thereof 'acquired' Kundakara puraiyadamlekkam 'No. 115 registered in the name of Kaipalli Nambutiri,' and in the possession of Tekkematam Svamiyar and other lands in Kaladikara Manjappara Proverthy, Kuttanad Taluk, which are associated with Sri Samkara-charya containing sites which are known as his birthplace, the site where his house stood and the site on which the remains of his mother were cremated.'

An excerpt from the Government order dated January 27, 1906, will be of interest: 'As another step towards the introduction of this

- 2 The festival has since become popular in the country and *Chaitra Su. 5* is now marked in the almanacs as Sri Samkara Jayanti day.
- 3 It may be recalled that Kaipalli is the name of the *illom* to which Sri Samkara belongs.

scheme, Government considers that measures should be adopted for the preservation of the birthplace of Sri Samkaracharya, the great religious teacher and reformer, whose name is held in veneration throughout India. It is situated in the village of Kaladi, Manjappara Proverthy, Kuttanad Taluk on the banks of the Alwaye. The locality is treated as *sankethum* or place of sanctity.....There is a walled enclosure in a compound close to the river, which according to tradition, is the site on which the remains of Sri Samkaracharya's mother were cremated, and the ghat in the river close by is also held sacred as having been used by the great reformer in performing the obsequies of his mother.'

Close by is the shrine of Sri Krishna, dear to the heart of Sri Samkara's mother. The Maharaja placed the site thus acquired at the disposal of the Jagadguru with an offering of ten thousand rupees to effect a clearing for the shrine proposed to be built.

#### *Fourth Tour (to Kalady)*

Overjoyed with the initial success of his scheme, the Jagadguru sought the grace of Sri Sarada and commenced his tour to Kalady. During these years he had become so enamoured of a quiet life of contemplation and communion with the Self in the quiet retreats of Narasimhavana, that it was a great wrench tearing himself away from the place. The verses that he addressed to Sri Sarada on the occasion came from the depth of his heart and reflect the working of his mind and his spiritual experiences. 'Why then do you send me away from your presence? I was happy spending my time visiting my Guru's shrine or the shrine of Sri Vidyatirtha, wandering along the Narasimha hill, chanting the *Vivekachudamani* or *Atmavidyavilasa* or the hymns of Sri Samkara or seated on the sands of the river fixing my mind on the *paratattva* (the Eternal Truth)? Am I not your child entrusted to your special care by my guru?'—in these and similar strains did he pour out his heart.

But the great scheme called for fulfilment—It was Sri Sarada's behest as he understood it. Before he left Sringeri he laid the foundation of a new temple for Sri Sarada to be built of granite. The Maharaja with his wife, mother and brother paid a sudden visit to the Acharya, and received initiation in the *Sivapanchakshari* and *Sri Vidya* mantras and the worship of *Sri Chakra*.



Leaving Sringeri in February 1907, the Acharya reached Bangalore in May. At the request of V. P. Madhava Rao, who had become Diwan of Mysore, and A. Ramachandra Aiyar, he installed an image of Sri Samkara in the newly acquired plot in Samkarapura in the heart of Bangalore City. Passing through Mysore by quick marches, he reached Gobichettipalayam, and visiting the villages on the banks of the Kaveri, arrived at Jambukesvaram (Tiruvanaikoil) near Tiruchirapalli to participate in the kumbhabhishekam of the temple of Sri Jambunatha and Sri Akhilandesvari, which had been renovated by Chidambaram Chettiyar of Kanadukattan. After a brief halt at Srirangam and Tiruchirapalli, he travelled to Koilur through Pudukkottai, and after spending a few days in Kanadukattan, Karaikudi and Devakottai, he performed the year's *chaturmasya* at Kunnakudi. Then Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Ramesvaram were visited. The disciples in the towns and villages of Tirunelveli district gave him a rousing reception, and out of their munificent contributions, two lakhs of rupees were earmarked for the consecration of the Kalady shrines. The Acharya went to Papanasam and Banatirtha falls, and spent three days in the famous shrine of Sri Kanayakumari in Cape Comorin. When he reached Trivandrum in 1909, a royal and unprecedented reception awaited him. The Maharaja presented an elephant and another sum of ten thousand rupees towards the expenses of the consecration of the Kalady shrines.

### *The Consecration of the Kalady Shrines*

At Perambavur, five miles from Kalady, the agent of the matha Srikantha Sastri and Ramachandra Aiyer came to the Acharya to report progress. The Acharya soon went into *samadhi*, and there stood before him the vision of Sri Aryamba, mother of Sri Samkara, as if welcoming him with a winning and benevolent smile. Reaching Kalady, the first place he visited was an asoka tree which stands at the place where the blessed lady was cremated by Sri Samkara.

Kalady, for long a sleepy hollow in the woods, pulsated with a new life on the arrival of the Acharya. Two beautiful shrines had been built, one for Sri Samkara and the other for Sri Sarada, both of which the Jagadguru consecrated on Monday, February 21, 1910, (*Saumya, Magha Su 12*). The act symbolised the re-descent of Sri Samkara on earth, and the Acharya prayed to both Sri Samkara

and Sri Sarada to establish in the land the reign of Dharma and ensure the well being of all people.<sup>4</sup>

The Svami of the Sivaganga matha was also present during the ceremonies. During his stay in Kalady, the Acharya received the Maharajas of Mysore and Cochin, and the Diwans and high officials of the States of Mysore, Travancore and Cochin.

On the return journey the Acharya passed through Cochin State, Coimbatore, Salem and Tiruchirapalli districts, and reaching Aiyampalayam installed in the Sri Dandapani temple of Tandavaraya Pillai, an image of Sri Samkara. His agent had already installed there an image of the Acharya. In the Mysore State, he visited Nandi hills and then Bangalore, where in the newly built matha buildings, he instituted a College of Higher Samskrit Studies—the *Bharatiya Girvana-praudha-vidya-abhivardhani*, and declared open the residential quarters for teachers and pupils which V. P. Madhava Rao had donated. Reaching Sringeri in March 1911, he hastened to the shrine of Sri Saradha and sang hymns of thankfulness saying. 'I have seen the Mother.....What then remains to be [done?]' A short time before he reached Sringeri, a fire had destroyed the temporary shrine of Sri Sarada, but the image within was not affected and even the flower garlands had not withered! 'The Kena Upanisad has sung that Agni, Vayu and the other Gods presiding over the elements of nature are powerless before the Supreme Light from whom they derive power. What wonder then,' exclaimed the Acharya in a fine extempore verse, 'that the murti of Sri Sarada was unscathed, her garlands and drapery intact, when flames licked the enclosing wooden walls.'

*The choice of successor :*

*Attainment of Videhamukti*

The Jagadguru had already fixed upon Narasimha Sastri, a young man born in Sringeri, of sparkling intelligence and exemplary character for nomination as his successor to the pitha. He had prayed to the Devi fervently to make Narasimha 'a paragon of wisdom, a pupil devoted to me.' Narasimha was at that time pursuing higher studies in the Samskrit College in the matha at

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4 *Bhaktisudhatangini*

pp 185 and 93

5 *ibid* p 97



**Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati IV**





Bangalore. Early in March 1912, the Jagadguru felt it was time for him to renounce his body. Finally resolved to initiate his successor, he directed that Narasimha Sastri should be brought to Sringeri after informing the Maharaja.

On March 20, 1912, (*Paritapi, Chaitra Su 2*), the great Acharya attained *videha mukti* and his mortal remains were interred in Narasimhavana, and over the samadhi, a linga was installed. Sri Narasimha ascended the pitha on April 7 under the name of Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Svami.

A prince among *atmajnanis*, an exemplar of bhakti, a veritable Bharati in knowledge, an adept in yoga, Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati Svami was universally hailed as an *avatar* of Sri Samkara. And appropriately enough he conceived the need to resuscitate Kalady, the birthplace of Sri Samkara. His universal sympathy and benevolence drew to his presence men of all religions. Muslims and Christians no less than Hindus saw in him a saint full of purity and godliness. Tutor Fraser avowed that his conversation with the Acharya had lifted his soul above life's turmoil. Wrote Charles Johnston: 'He is a man of the highest character, a magnetic personality, a fine Sanskrit scholar, and a perfect master of the intricacies of the Vedanta philosophy.' While adoring princes offered thousands of rupees, poor devotees offered their bhakti, which appealed to him as nothing else did. He would discourse on the most abstruse Sastras for hours in the presence of savants, and to the crowds of devotees he would converse in homely language and convey to them the great truths of religion. Thousands sought relief from troubles, and none went away disappointed. He gave relief out of his intense psychic powers which came to him unsolicited. To give an instance: In the course of his tour through Travancore, a poor Brahman poet living in Asrama near Nagercoil prayed that his dumb child be cured. The Acharya taught the poet a mantra, with the help of which he cured his boy. The poet commemorated the event in a stotra that he composed later.

Like Sri Samkara the Acharya preached Vaidika dharma and condemned immoral practice in the name of religion. He instituted Vedic observances in preference to Tantric rites in the temples, he consecrated, and the murtis of Vishnu, Siva, Devi, Subrahmanya or

Samkara which were installed in them, he sanctified through mantras and the force of his tapasya.

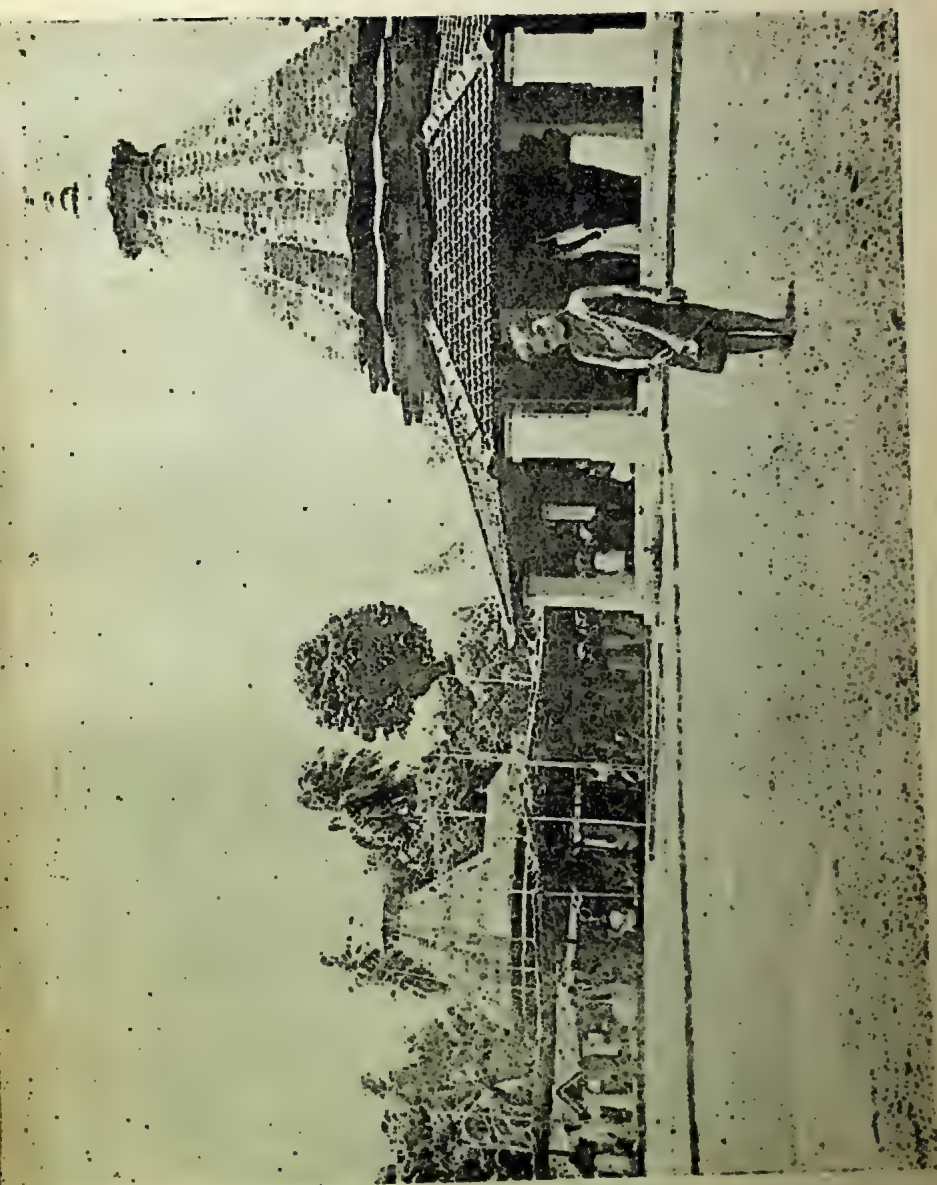
Many eminent Sanyasins had their training and *vidyabhyasa* under the Jagadguru; one of them is Sri Venkataramana Sarasvati who later become Sri Bharati Krishna tirtha, Head of the Govardhana pitha and another K. Ramachandra Aiyar who became the *siddha* Sri Ramananda Sarasvati. Ardhanari, who later became the *siddha* Vallimalai Sri Sacchidananda, had his first initiation from the Jagadguru into *vairagya* and *vanaprasta asrama*. In response to the Jagadguru's commands and under his guidance the Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, brought out a complete edition of Sri Samkara's works, and a series of publications on Vedanta. The hymns sung by the Jagadguru on different occasions, often during his visits to temples, have been published as an anthology under the title *Bhaktisudhatarangini*.

There are three biographies of this Jagadguru. N. Srikantha Sastri's Kannada book was translated into Tamil and published by the Sri Vani Vilas Press. An English adaptation by B. V. Kamesvara Aiyar and a shorter biography (in Tamil and in English) by R. Krishnaswami Aiyar were also published by the Sri Vani Vilas Press.

#### 34. SRI CHANDRASEKHARA BHARATI IV (Sanyasa 1912; Reigned 1912-54)

Laureate among the scholars who were patronised by Sri Nrsimha Bharati VII was Subba Sastri. Later in life he retired to the Himalayas as a recluse. His son Gopala Sastri inherited his father's flair for learning. His spouse Lakshmi Ammal bore him fourteen children, but the youngest Nrsimha alone survived. Young Nrsimha was brought up under the care of Srikantha Sastri, the agent of the matha, and had his early schooling in the Middle school, where he learned Kannada and English. Sparkling with intelligence, the young lad attracted the attention of Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati Svami, who from the beginning marked him out for succession to the pitha. The Jagadguru had him transferred to the Sad Vidya Sanjivini pathasala for Vedic studies and later sent him to the College in Bangalore for higher studies in





Kalady Temples



Mimamsa and Vedanta. He prayed that his disciple and successor should embody in his person all the great traditions of knowledge and spirituality that the pitha had stood for, and true to his *samkalpa* all of them found their abode and fulfilment in the disciple<sup>a</sup> who ascended the *Vyakhyana simhasana* under the name of Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati, (April 7, 1912)

### ***Early years of his Pontificate***

The new Jagadguru gathered round him veteran scholars, one of them Virupaksha Sastri later became head of the Kudli matha. Virupaksha often proclaimed that the Jagadguru's profound scholarship was the result of divine grace rather than any effort on his part. Within three years, the Jagadguru mastered all the recondite works on Vedanta, not to speak of the other sastras.

The renovation of the temple of Sri Sarada was completed, and a beautiful shrine was erected over the *samadhi* of the late guru in Narasimhavana. In 1916, the Acharya had the *kumbhabhishekam* of both the shrines performed, at which the Maharaja of Mysore was present, as also representatives of the Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda and several other rulers. Thousands of disciples came to Sringeri to participate in the functions and receive the blessings of their new guru. The Jagadguru then set his heart upon *tapasya*, and placing complete faith in Sri Sarada and his guru, he withdrew into solitude, occasionally coming out to teach the *bhashyas* to deserving disciples.

## First Tour

*First Tour*

Invited by the Maharaja of Mysore, he started in January 1924 on a tour of South India. At Mysore the Maharaja received him with all tokens of devotion. With the Maharaja's help, the site around the house where the previous Jagadguru was born was acquired for the matha, and a shrine for the late Jagadguru was built with a pathasala attached to it. He then entered the plains at Satyamangalam. His further itinerary was on the lines of his predecessor's: Gobichettipalayam, the agraharas along the course of the Kaveri upto Jambukesvaram, Srirangam and Tiruchirapali, and then through

6 In the four verses that the Acharya addressed to Sri Sarada, he prayed that his disciple sri Nrsimha should become a *sarvajña* (poly histor).



Pudukkottai State to Chettinad, halting at Kunnakudi for the Chaturmasya vows. After visiting Ramanathapuram, Ramesvaram and Madurai, he visited the towns and villages on the banks of the Tamraparni including Papanasam and Banatirtha falls and Tiruchendur. He worshipped the Goddess Kanyakumari and proceeded to Trivandrum where the Maharaja received him in a manner worthy of the eminence of the Acharya and the traditions of his state. The Acharya celebrated Samkara jayanti (April 1927) at Kalady, and inaugurated in the pathasala the courses in Vedanta. The Maharaja of Cochin visited the Acharya in Kalady. Then passing through Cochin State, he visited Palghat and Coimbatore and at Nanjangud instituted a pathasala. He reached Sringeri towards the end of 1927. The magnificence of the tour and the spiritual blessings that the Jagadguru diffused to all who approached him are still in the memory of thousands of people.

*Life of seclusion and tapasya :*

*Nomination of successor.*

Four years of busy touring was followed by a long period of practical seclusion from the outside world, and the Jagadguru gave himself upto intense tapasya oblivious of his surroundings. He discarded all pomp and wealth, and reduced his personal wants to the barest minimum. But the affairs of the matha required attention. Under inspiration from Sri Sarada, the Jagadguru designated Srinivasan, a youth of remarkable intelligence and potentiality for spiritual eminence, his successor, and gave him sanyasa with the name of Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Swami (May 22, 1931). The Junior Acharya soon became highly proficient in learning and took over the spiritual and secular affairs of the matha, giving considerable relief to the senior Acharya.

At the request of the Jagadguru, the Mysore Government appointed a senior officer of their administrative service, who under the designation 'officer-in-charge', took charge of the revenue administration of the samsthanam.

Seldom did the Jagadguru receive disciples while in retirement ; and on the few occasions that he did, for which hundreds would be waiting, a smile or a significant nod proved more efficacious and

illuminating than a sermon, and would fill their souls with blessedness. By dint of introspection and tapasya, his body lost all suggestions of being material and appeared sublimated into spirit radiating a halo all round.

Some disciples (among them were medical practitioners) thought that his mind was unbalanced and attempted to 'cure' him, and finally convinced themselves that the 'malady' was incurable. To the surprise of these worthies, the Jagadguru would suddenly become 'normal' and baffle all their prognostications. During these exalted moods, the Jagadguru's experiences transcended space and time, and the few observations he then made proved it. His individual ego was merged in the Universal Ego, and wherever he turned, he saw and experienced the self, the one Self in all.

### *Second Tour*

In 1938, the Jagadguru yielded to the prayers of disciples to visit Bangalore and stay there for some months: Facing the shrine of Sri Samkara in the Samkara matha another shrine had been built for Sri Sarada which the Acharya consecrated. From Bangalore he went to Coimbatore and thence to Kalady, where he stayed for ten months. The Maharaja of Travancore, Sri Chittirai Tirunal, and his distinguished Diwan C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar afforded all facilities during the Acharya's sojourn, and the latter visited the Acharya twice.

The Acharya returned to Sringeri in 1940 and again went into retirement in the Narasimhavana. Though he was not accessible, thousands who prayed for his blessings in their troubles got relief, and many others were blessed even without any conscious attempt on their part to solicit his grace. Here is a thoughtprovoking incident. The Acharya was rarely interested in the news of the world and never read a newspaper. In his retreat none but his close attendants approached him. Suddenly one day in December 1950, he penned a letter of benediction to King Tribhuvan of Nepal, who had then fled his native soil and come to India. The Great Powers were none too friendly, and considered that he had abdicated. The letter of the Acharya held out the assurance that the king's troubles 'would disappear in the space of three weeks even as the morning dew before the rising sun, and that by the grace of Sri Pasupatinath and Sri

Sarada he would regain his throne.' King Tribhuvan did get back the throne, and the event opened a new and bright chapter in the history of Nepal.' Countless others of various stations in life have similarly been blessed. These illustrate the universality of his mind in moods of introspection, and how compassion moved him to return temporarily to his ego-centre to send a warning and blessing.

When numerous disciples approached the Acharya for permission to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of his birth which fell in October 1952, he sternly discouraged the idea. When it was suggested that the funds collected from far and near would be spent in performing *atirudra* and *sahasra chandi homas*,<sup>8</sup> he approved. The *homas* were conducted in April 1953—1-1 months after the birthday anniversary, to secure happiness for humanity. A larger concourse of people from distant places foregathered to witness this unique function and to get the blessings of the Jagadguru. The Master sent his blessings with the assurance that the homas were acceptable to God, as a token of which there was a shower of rain when the ceremonies were reaching their climax.

The Jagadguru came out of his retirement a few weeks after the homas had concluded, resumed his normal routine and received disciples. On August 24, 1954, President Rajendra Prasad paid a visit to Sringeri and was received by both the Senior and Junior Acharyas with whom he spent some hours in intimate and soulful conversation. The Rastrapati's innate humility, piety, godliness and respect for saints much pleased the two gurus, who showered on him their blessings.<sup>9</sup>

#### *Videhamukti*

A few weeks later the Jagadguru of his own volition decided to free himself from the fetters of the mortal body; events point to this conclusion. On Sunday, September 26, 1954, he got up very early in

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7 M. S. M. Sharma: *Pilgrimage to Sringeri*, pp. 31-2.

8 Homa or oblations in fire reciting the *mantras* of the Rudraprasna in *Yajur Veda* 14,641 times and the 700 *mantras* of *Chandi* or *Devi Saptasati* or *Devi Mahatmyam* 1000 times.

9 *ibid*, pp 37-39 which contain an account of the President's visit.



the morning even when it was quite dark, and walked towards the Tunga ; a servant followed at a slight distance. He stepped into the water without heeding the servant's warning that the water was deep there, and advancing further into the current had a dip. Then he did *pranayama*, and dipped again. The servant saw the Acharya's body floating down the current. In consternation the servant plunged into the river, caught hold of the Acharya, but in the effort lost his consciousness. A gentleman, who happened to hear the shouts of the servant, brought the two ashore. The servant was soon restored to life, but 'nothing could be done in the other case.' It was reported 'that his His Holiness's body was in an erect sitting posture with legs crossed as at the time of contemplation and was straightened out only in an attempt to restore respiration,' and that 'there was no sign of drowning or of suffocation or of any struggle for life. His Holiness had ever been in the best of health, and his passing away naturally baffled all doctors, just as he was baffling them even when he was alive. In life as in death he was equally an enigma to all who sought physical explanation for spiritual experiences.'<sup>10</sup>

Casting about for similar extraordinary instances, one is reminded of Sri Ramachandra, who entered the river Sarayu before his ascension, and Rshabha yogi, who got release from the body by entering a huge forest fire. And here was one, as great as the greatest known to us.

The Jagadguru's mortal remains found their resting place in a samadhi just by the side of that of his great guru in Narasimhavana, and over the samadhi, the present Jagadguru has constructed a temple. The anniversary of the day will ever fall on the Mahalaya New Moon day, the day of the annual *abhisheka* of Sri Sarada preparatory to the navaratri celebrations. What would remind us more forcibly than this coincidence of the identity of the guru with the Supreme Being here manifested as Sarada!

Many disciples had been forewarned of the Jagadguru's intention by word or sign, but none understood its implication. To one he said, 'If before you pay your next visit to Sringeri, I get released

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10 This paragraph is largely an adaptation from 'The Saint of Sringeri pp. 69-70) by R. Krishnaswami Aiyar (Sri Vani Vilas Press).

from my mortal coil. You have only to think of me, and I shall be with you (in spirit): As President, Rajendra Prasad observed 'saints like him continue to help humanity even after leaving the body.'

During the early years of his pontificate, he gave discourses to public audiences or long talks to smaller gatherings. Scholars wondered at the ease with which he made clear to the meanest intelligence, with the help of parables and apt illustrations, the significance of Dharma as well as the sublime truths of Advaita. And on those occasions when he had just emerged from retirement, the fortunate disciple who approached him would gaze with reverence and wonderment at his luminous face, the half closed eyes mirroring the imponderable depths of his *atmabhava*, and get an instant feeling of joy and satisfaction that his wishes had been fulfilled.

Among the Sanyasins who received instructions in Vedanta from the Jagadguru were the Acharyas of the Nelamavu matha—Sri Kamalananda Nrsimha Bharati and his successor and Sri Ramachandrananda tirtha, Head of the Sakatapuram matha.

Some of the Jagadguru's dialogues and discourses have been collected and published both in English and in Tamil by R. Krishnaswamy Aiyar, under the titles *Dialogues with the Guru* (Chetana. Bombay); *The Call of the Jagadguru* (Ganesh, Madras); and *Sparks from a Divine Anvil* (Ganesh). The Sri Vani Vilas Press has published the Tamil editions. The matha has published in an attractive volume the Jagadguru's masterly bhashya on the *Vivekachudamani*. His *stotras* which are now being serialised in the 'Sri Samkara kripa' will soon come out in book form from the Sri Vani Vilas Press as a publication of the Akhila Bharata Samkara Seva Samiti.

### 35. SRI ABHINAVA VIDYA TIRTHA

Prior to the reorganisation of the judiciary on the British model, courts in India had judges well versed in the *Smrtis* and *Dharma Sastras* and possessed of high integrity. One such eminent judge on the bench of the Mysore Adalat Court was Kaipu Sitarama Sastri. His great grandson is Kaipu Rama Sastri. To him was born a son on the auspicious *dipavali* day in the year *Nala* (*Arpisi*, *Ba 14* corresponding to November 13, 1917) under the constellation *svati*.

The child was named Srinivasan. It may be observed in passing that the great composer and master of Karnatic music, Tyagaraja, belongs to a collateral line.

Even as a boy, Srinivasan, exhibited moods of detachment from worldly affairs and family bonds and a fondness for bhajana, puja and the study of sacred literature. No wonder then that Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Svami felt attracted to this lad and thought of making him his successor. To the Jagadguru, it was also Sarada's behest. Srinivasan, who had his early schooling in Bangalore up to the Secondary School stage, was brought to Sringeri for advanced education and training in the Sastras. His upanayanam was celebrated in the shrine of Sarada.

The Jagadguru initiated Srinivasan into sanyasa on May 22, 1931, under the *diksha* name of Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha. The young Svami had the help of V. S. Ramachandra Sastri, now Principal of the Sanskrit College in Bangalore, in his initial courses in Nyaya and other sastras, and for twenty-four years enjoyed the unique advantage of the great Jagadguru's close association, training and instruction. Under the fostering care of the Jagadguru, the junior Svami easily attained high proficiency in learning and in Atmic realisation. He acquainted himself with all the details of the administration of the samsthanam. Nothing of any importance was done without his scrutiny and guidance, and the control he exercised was loving but firm and thorough. His command of Samskrit is remarkable, and it is an intellectual treat to listen to his discourses in the assemblies of pandits. He is also proficient in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Hindi.

Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati prophesied that the Junior Svami would become as great as Sri Sacchidananda Siva. Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati; the disciples of the pitha see in Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha Svami, the spiritual greatness, the wealth of tapasya, the universal compassion and the immense capacity to elevate others that were such remarkable traits of the two former Jagadgurus. Vice-President Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan is one of the savants who enjoyed the Svami's conversation on topics of high spirituality; and during his visit to Sringeri in 1954, Rashttrapati Rajendra Prasad felt the impress of the young Acharya's intellectual and spiritual greatness. Between May 1931 and September 1954, the Sarada pitha shone with the brilliance of two spiritual luminaries.



The late Jagadguru's disappearance cast a deep gloom over the young Acharya, who spent the next few months performing puja at the samadhi of his guru and in tapasya. His formal pattabhishekam as the thirty-fifth pontiff, which was celebrated on October 16, 1954, was attended by a vast gathering of disciples and officials of the Government. The Acharya of Hariharapura matha was also present. In March 1955, the Jagadguru made a pilgrimage to the source of the Tunga. In response to the prayers of his numerous disciples in South India, the Jagadguru started on a tour of the South with a visit to Kalasa on March 14, 1956. In South Kanara district, he worshipped with gold bilva leaves Sri Mukambika at Kollur and visited the shrines at Dharmasthala, Manjunath, Mangalore etc., Cannanore, Calicut, Palghat, Chittur and the neighbouring places were then visited; at Guruvayur he offered worship to Sri Krishna. The Nambutiri Svamis of the Tekke matha received him in Trichur, famous for its Siva shrine. At Kalady he stayed for three months to celebrate the Vyasa puja and the chaturmasya and navaratri. During this period thousands flocked to receive his blessings; among whom were Sri Chittirai Tirunal Bala Rama Varma, Maharaja of Travancore, who made a cash offering of Rs. 16,000 and the Adviser to the then Government of Travancore-Cochin. During the Ganesa puja week he convened a *vidvat sadas* or assembly of scholars and distributed valuable presents in recognition of their scholarship. At the invitation of the Svamis of the Ramakrishna asrama, he visited the Samkara College and other institutions conducted by that mission. The Maharaja of Cochin entertained the Jagadguru in his palace, and for his great scholarship was honoured with the title of *Abhinava Tarka Vagisa*. Then the Jagadguru toured Travancore from Alwaye and Parur in the north to the extreme south. At Trivandrum he was received with all honours by the Maharaja and the Governor-B. Ramakrishna Rao, and worshipped Sri Padmanabha. In Cape Comorin he worshipped Goddess Kanya Kumari and distributed gifts to several deserving people. For ten months he toured the district of Tirunelveli visiting Valliyur, Kalakkad, Sermadevi, Kallidaikurichi, Kadayam, Tuticorin and other places. In Tirunelveli town he celebrated Samkara jayanti. He worshipped God Subrahmanya at Tiruchendur with gold bilva leaves. The Vyasapuja and chaturmasya for 1957 were celebrated in the beautiful health resort of Courtallam. Svami Trivikrama Ramanada Bharati of the local Siddhesvari pitha

frequently called on the Jagadguru and attended the Ganesa Chaturthi *vidvat sadas*. Navaratri was celebrated in Shencottah. Then in the Ramanathapuram district, the Acharya passed through Srivilliputtur, Rajapalayam and other places and reached Ramanathapuram town. After visiting Navapashanam and Devipattanam, the Acharya and party ferried<sup>11</sup> across the Pamban strait to Ramesvaram, where he offered puja on a grand scale to Sri Ramanatha and Sri Parvatavardhani. The sacred bath at Dhanushkodi was the occasion for the distribution of numerous gifts. Sivaganga, Devakottai, Karaikudi, Koilur, Pallattur, Kandamur, Kottaiyur, Kunnakkudi, Tirupattur and other towns in Chettinad entertained him lavishly and thousands received his blessings. After visiting Arantangi, he went to Avadayarkoil (Tiruperundurai) for worship of Sri Atmanatha, where he was received by the local Tambiran Svami and gave darsan to thousands of devotees of the Tanjore district. In Pudukkottai, he stayed in the palace of the Raja. After visiting some other places near Pudukkottai and Kulitalai and the neighbouring villages in the Tiruchirapalli district, he travelled to Melur and then to Madurai which he reached early in March 1958. Madurai gave him a magnificent reception and, with all honours, he worshipped Sri Sundaresvara and Sri Minaksi, and celebrated Samkara jayanti. Thousands thronged to his camp every day for his darsan and blessings and listened to his discourses. Leaving Madurai, he passed through Sholavandan, Dindigul, etc., and at Palni worshipped Sri Dandapani to whom he conducted puja on a lavish scale to secure the well being of humanity. From Palni he proceeded to Kalady to perform the Vyasapuja on July 1, 1958. Among the numerous visitors, who had darsan of the Jagadguru during the three months he stayed in Kalady, were Governor B. Ramakrishna Rao (Kerala) and ex-Governor R. R. Diwakar (Behar). The Ganapati puja *vidvatsadas* was highlighted by the active participation in the polemical discussions, of Sri Rama Varma Parikshit, Maharaja of Cochin. Leaving Kalady, the Acharya passed through Nallepilli, Kollengode, where the Raja entertained him, and Palghat, and reached Coimbatore early in October. The annual aradhana of the late Jagadguru and the navaratri celebrations, which included *satachandi japu* and *homa*, attracted tens of

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11 An influential Muslim family enjoys the privilege of ferrying the Acharyas of Sringeri from Mandapam to Pamban.



thousands of devotees. In Ootacamund he was the guest of C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, and there he received the Maharaja of Mysore, Sri Jayachamaraja Wodeyar. He then visited the Pykara and Kunda projects, and in December 1958 several other towns and villages in the Nilgiri and Coimbatore districts.

During this tour the Samskrit Commission constituted by the Government of India interviewed him to record his views on the steps to be taken to promote Samskrit learning.

The Acharya's visit to Coimbatore was commemorated by the erection of a new building for the Samkara-matha in that city with a shrine to Sarada, a Veda Pathasala, an assembly hall and rooms for guests. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar laid the foundation stone on February 9, 1959. The Municipalities of Dharapuram and Erode also gave a civic reception to the Jagadguru. He performed the *Mahasivaratri puja* in Erode. From his camp in Bhavani, he visited Mettur Dam. In the Mettur Township the Engineer and officers of the Electricity Department, and in the Chemical Factory, the officers and residents of the colony accorded him a grand reception, and showed him round the factory, the dam, the power-house etc. After visiting the important villages on the right bank of the Kaveri, he camped in Karur in the last week of March 1959.

In April 1959 he performed puja at the Sadasiva Brahmendra Samadhi at Nerur. On Sankara Jayanti Day, *Vidvat Sadas* was held at Tiruchirapalli. After visiting Trichy, Srirangam, Bhikshander Kovil, Tiruvayar, Mannargudi, Tiruvarur, Mayavaram, Dharmapuram (where the Head of the Adhinam entertained him lavishly), Sirkali Katur and Vaidiswaran Kovil, he arrived at Chidambaram and then Neyveli. After taking a holy bath at Kaveripatnam at the confluence of the Kaveri and the Sea, he arrived at Tanjore, via Kumbhakonam where he worshipped Kumbhesvara. After visiting Aiyampalayam and Musiri, he arrived at Sriramasamudram for Vyasa Puja. On this occasion of Vyasa Puja the Akhila Bharata Sankara Seva Samiti was started under the patronage of the Jagadguru and arrangements were made to publish "*Sri Sankara Kripa*" a monthly magazine for propagating Dharma which has since gained much popularity for the high standard it has maintained. *Vidvat Sadas* was conducted during the Vinayaka Chaturti week. Navaratri



Puja was conducted at Salem. After visiting Turaiyur, Musiri, Tirukovilur, Cuddalore, Villupuram, Rasipuram, Bhavani and other places on the way he opened at Coimbatore the reconstructed Sankara Matha. He participated in the *Kumbhabhishekam* conducted at the Sri Rajarajeswari Temple at the Sankara Matha at Karur. After visiting Tirumanilayur, Namakkal and Tiruchengode, he arrived at Salem where a building with attached sites was donated to the Sankara Matha. Further on he visited Dharmapuri, Hosur, Krishnagiri, Tirupatur, Vellore, Tindivanam, Pondicherry, Tiruvannamalai, Ranipet, Chittore, Gudibanda (Kolar District, Mysore State), Bhagyapalli, Kadi (Chittore Dist.), Hindupur, Penugonda and Anantapur. Sivaratri puja was conducted at Hampi (Vijayanagar) where there is a branch of the Sringeri Matha. There he was honoured by the Virupaksha Matha.

Next he visited Hosapeta, Sandur, Kurnool, Srisailem, Anantapur, Bellary, Munirabad, Hulaki, Narayanapet. Mahaboobnagar and Hyderabad. At Hyderabad his stay was for three weeks. On this occasion the *murtis* of Sri Sarada and Sankara were installed in the newly built Sankara Matha constructed by Raja Sri Venkatrao Limbekar. Sankara Jayanti Puja and Vidwat Sadas were also conducted at Hyderabad. Free *Brahmopadesa* was done to hundreds of boys. Next in the tour were Yadugiri, Warangal, Kammammeth, Bhadrachalam, villages in West Godavari, Ellore, Tadepalli, Rajahmundry and villages on the banks of the Godavari, Pithapur, Vijayawada, Anantavaram, Kollur, Ongole, Nellore etc. At Kakinada, a grand Vidwat Sadas was conducted. Finally he reached Madras on 7th July 1960. The Public of Madras extended to him a grand welcome. Chaturmasya Puja was performed at T. Nagar.

During His Holiness's stay at Madras the President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad arrived at the Camp to render homage and performed *Pada Puja*. The Acharya conferred on the President the title of *Rashtra Ratna*. Among other distinguished persons who called and paid their respect were H. E. Bishnuram Mehdi, Governor of Madras, the Governor of Kerala, Ambassador Elsworth Bunker, American Consul General, Sri C. D. Deshmukh, Sri C. Subramaniam and Sri M. Bhakthavatsalam.

The Vinayaka Chaturthi Vidwat Sadas was conducted at Madras.

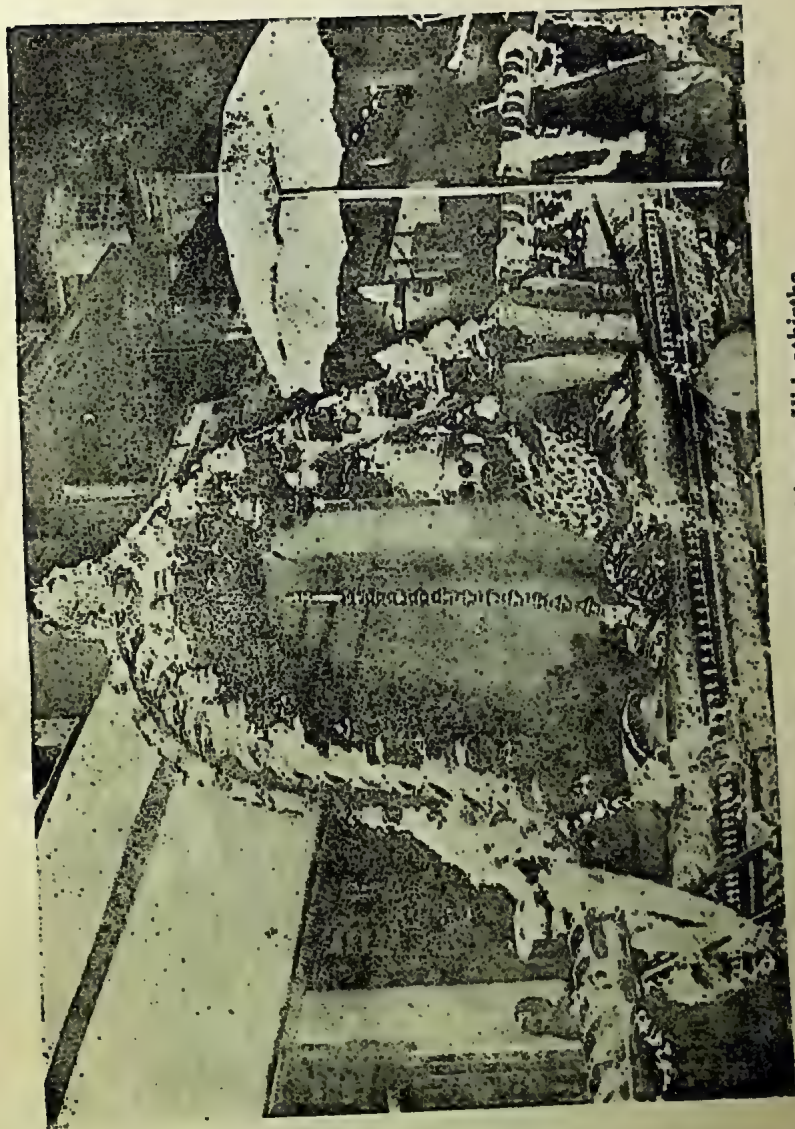
While he stayed at Raja Annamalaipuram, the Svamiji of Sivaganga performed *Pada Puja* and got his blessings. Similarly, the Swamiji of Sakatapuram also visited him and got his blessings. *Navaratri Puja*, *Chandi Homa* and *Navaratri Durbar* were conducted at Raja Annamalaipuram, which were attended by thousands of devotees.

His Holiness blessed the *Kumbhabhishekam* of Sri Nataraja at the Siva Vishnu Temple at Tiagarajanagar, and performed Puja to Sri Nataraja. He acceded to the request of Minister Sri Chandramowli of Andhra Pradesh and presided over the All-India Vidvat Sadas at Tirupati, where he stayed for some days. After visiting Tiruttani, Kalahasti and Trivellore he returned to Madras, and stayed for a few days at "Sudharma," Edward Elliots Road. At George Town, he old Sankara Matha was renovated. At the request of the disciples of Madras, he established a branch Sankara Matha at No. 9, Venkatanarayana Road, T. Nagar. On 31-1-1961, he visited Kanchipuram and stayed at the Sringeri Matha there for 3 days worshipping in the great temples. Then after visiting Pakshithiratham and Mahabalipuram he returned to Madras. That year's Sivaratri-puja which was performed at Triplicane has left a lasting impression on all his disciples.

He started from Madras on 5-3-61 for the tour of Andhra Pradesh. On the way Ambattur, Naidupet and Nellore were visited. At Guntur the foundation stone for a new Sankara Matha was laid at the request of the local devotees. Sankara Jayanti Celebrations were conducted at Vijayawada, on which occasion Dharma Upanayanam was performed for hundreds of boys. A Vidvat Sadas was also conducted.

He also presided over a Vidvat Sadas conducted at Kollur by the local devotees. When he returned to Vijayawada a matha which had been in existence for a long time was given to the Sringeri Matha.

Machlibander, Srikakulam, Gudivada, Kunjavaram and Tenali were then visited. At Tenali, Sri Pinapadu Vidyasankara Bharati visited the Acharya and surrendered to him all his authority over the Sankara Matha which he had been conducting there. Then he toured Repalli, Seekala and Nagarjunasagar.



**Sri Sri Jagadguru Abhinava Vidyathirtha  
Mahaswamigal**





On 3-7-61 he reached Guntur and a murti of Sri Samkaracharya was installed in the newly built temple for which he had laid the foundation stone.

On this happy occasion, Sri Chandramowli, Minister of Andhra Pradesh Government extolled the *Dharma Prachara* of the Acharya and offered him a silver Sarada Vighraha and a highly ornamental casket made of sandal-wood. A branch of the Akhila Bharata Samkara Seva Samiti was established and arrangements were made to publish "Sri Sankara Kripa" in Telugu which is now widely circulated. From there he visited Srisailam through Narasaraopet. At Srisailam, Rs. 1,116/- was reverentially offered to the Acharya on behalf of Andhra Government. The Acharya conducted Puja to Sri Mallikarjuneswara and Sri Bhramaramba and donated Rs. 1,000/- to the temple.

At Cuddappah, he was welcomed by the Swami of Pushpagiri Pitha, a branch of Sringeri Matha.

After visiting Dharmavaram and Elahanka he arrived at Bangalore, where he was welcomed by His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore, Sri B. D. Jetti, Chief Minister of Mysore, and other Ministers of the Cabinet, and High Court Judges. Next day an address was presented to him by His Highness Sri Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, the Governor of Mysore, on behalf of the public. *Vyasa Puja* and *Chaturmasya Puja* were conducted at the Bangalore Sankara Matha.

The usual Vidwat Sabha was conducted. The Svami of Udipi Pejavar Matha also attended the Sadas.

Navaratri celebrations were conducted at the Sankara Matha with *Satachandi homa* and *Devī Bhagavata Parayanam*.

For the benefit of the people of Bangalore, he laid the foundation stone of a *Kalyanamandaba* at a cost of 2.5 lakhs. The birthday celebration of the Acharya were conducted in a fitting manner. The Mysore branch of the Akhila Bharata Sankara Seva Samiti was established and it was decided that the "Sankara Kripa" be issued in Kannada also.

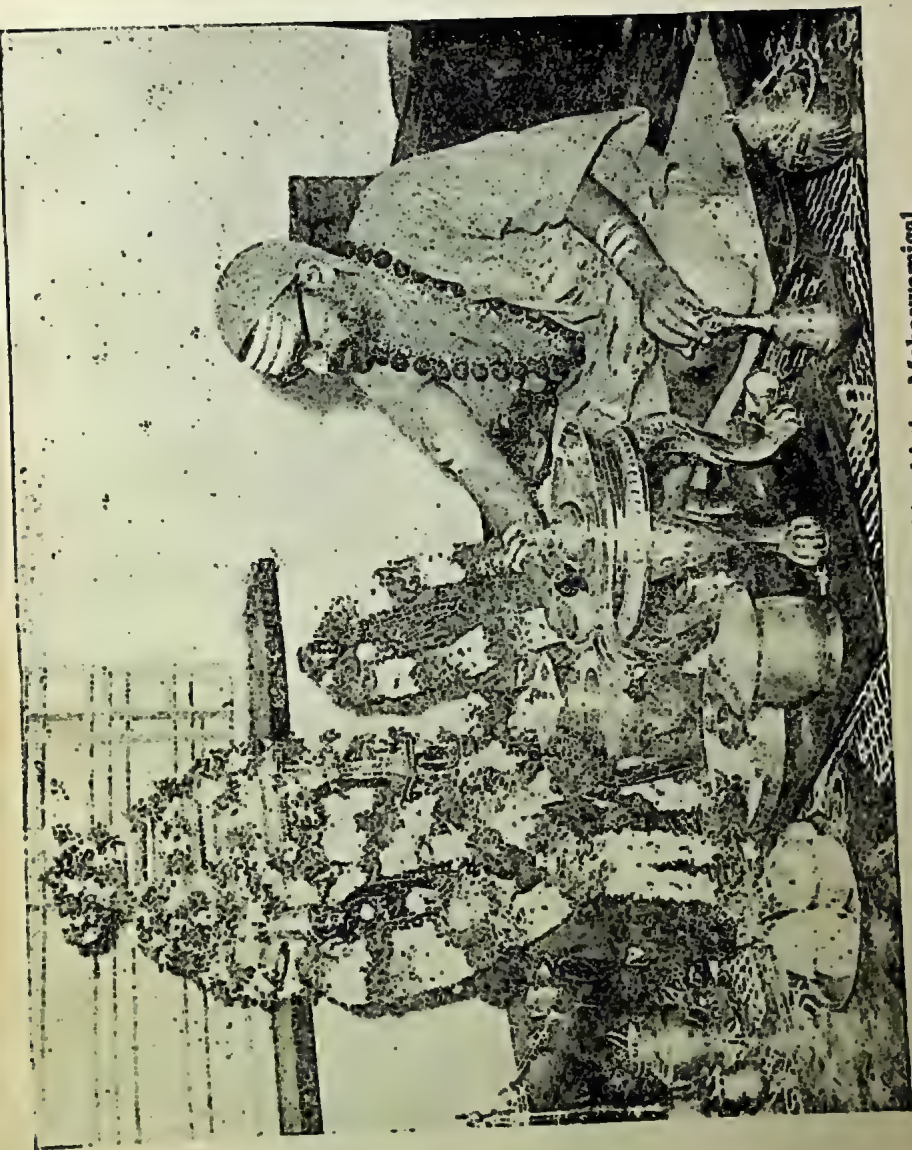
He visited the different extensions of Bangalore such as Sankara-pura, Malleswara and Rajajinagar and exhorted all to follow Satya and Dharma on all occasions. During his stay at Bangalore, the Vice-President of India, Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan had darsan of His Holiness. An address was presented to him at Puttanna Shetty Town Hall.

On 13-12-61 he left Bangalore and reached Rudrapatna through Ramnagara, Chennapatna and Krishnarajapetah and on the way at the request of H. K. Veeranna Gowda, Minister, Mysore Government, camped at Maddur for three days. From 20-12-61 to 31-12-61 *Atirudramahayagna* was conducted in his presence and on this occasion lakhs of people assembled and had his blessings and listened to his *Upadesa*. Starting from Rudrapatna, he visited Kunanuru, Shaligrama, Bettidapura, Hunsur and Nanjangud. At Nanjangud he performed *archana* to Srikanteswara according to the traditional custom of the Matha. He arrived at Mysore on 18-1-62. At the outskirts of the City, he was welcomed by His Highness the Maharaja and was presented with a baby elephant, named "Urmila". He was conducted to the Palace in a golden palanquin with *purnakumbham* and was offered *padapuja* in the Palace according to custom, by the Maharaja along with the members of the Royal family. To counteract the evil effects of the combination of the eight planets and to bring peace to the world, Chandramovliswara Puja was performed on the hills. Tirumukoodalu and Narsipur, Mandya, Chamrajanagar, Gundlapeta and Srirangapatna were then visited. At Mandya, a *murti* of Sankara was installed in a newly constructed temple.

Sivaratripuja was performed in Bangalore, which he left on 6-3-62, and arrived at Madras passing through Chintamani and Ranipet. At Madras *Kumbhabhishekam* was performed at the temple of Sri Ananta Padmanabhasvami at Adyar. The newly renovated Sankara Math at George Town was also inaugurated. Starting from Madras he reached Coimbatore where he performed *Kumbhabhishekam* for the Panchamukha Ganapati at the temple in Perur which was constructed by Mysore Sri Krishna Iyer who handed over the management of this temple to the Sringeri Math.

He then called for a meeting at Kalady to improve the conditions of the Sankara College which had come under his management. Donations were also offered on the spot and further donations





Sri Sri Jagadguru Abhinava Vidyathirtha Mahaswamikal  
35th Pontiff



were promised. H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore sent Rs. 25,000/- towards the improvement of the College. After suggesting methods for improving the College, the Acharya reached Salem. After inaugurating the *Kalyanamantapa* in Salem, he returned to Bangalore.

From 6-4-62 to 18-4-62 his camp was at Bangalore. During this period *Kumbhabhishekam* was performed to Sri Subramania-swami at the new temple constructed in the Kumara Park. Subsequently Magadi, Kunigal, Chennarayapatna, Sravanabelagola, Holenarasipura and Hassan were visited. At Sravanabelagola he was honoured by the Jain Svami. At Hassan, a building, *Guru Jyoti*, was gifted to him by Rao Bahadur Gurubhakta Tilaka Sri Nanjundiah and his sons to be used as Sankaralaya.

Then Arakalgod, Sakaleshpur, Belur, Halebid, Sakkarapatna, Kadur, Ajampur, Hosadurga, Chitladurg, Chellakira, Hiriyur, Madhugiri and Tumkur were visited. At Tumkur he was welcomed and honoured by Sri Sivakumaraswami of Siddhaganga. At Belur, *Kumbhabhishekam* was performed for the shrine of Ganapati, in the Police station yard, and for Adi Sankara in the Siva Temple.

After visiting Arsikare, Belur, Tarikere and Narasimharajapura, he arrived at Kigga on 7-7-62 and worshipped Sri Santa and Rishya-sringa. He reached Sringeri at 7-20 A.M. on 9-7-62 and received an affectionate welcome back to his math.

The Chaturmasya Puja of the year was performed at Sringeri.

After a brief stay at Sringeri His Holiness again started on a pilgrimage to the Shimoga, Chikmagalur, and Kanara districts.

At Gokarana, which His Holiness visited early in December 1962, he offered special worship to the sacred Atmalinga Mahabaleswara and the Goddess Parvati and had a *Maharudra Homa* performed to secure victory for our arms and peace and prosperity for our holy land. Parthakali was his first camp in Goa territory, where he was entertained in the math of Svami Dwarakanath Maharaj, the Guru of the Gauda Sarasvat Brahmins. At Mardgaon, he was received by a reception committee on behalf of the people of



the town and was taken in procession. Twenty-five miles off, about ten miles from Panjim, the party reached the backwaters. The Superintendent of Police and his staff and other high officials received His Holiness and 'ferried' him across in a special motor launch. From there he was escorted by a Special Motor cycle squad of the Police piloted by the Deputy Superintendent. On reaching the outskirts of Panjim, he was taken on a two mile long procession led by high officials, to the Mahalakshmi temple where Lt.-Governor Sivashankar received Him with becoming devotion and honours. This was on the night of December 18, the eve of the celebration of the first anniversary of the liberation of Goa. A high official, a Mysorean, made to His Holiness an apt observation. "On the day His Holiness graciously started the performance of the *Maha Rudra Homa* at Rudrapatna on the Kaveri in Mysore State, (December 19, 1961), the Police action was taken and Goa was liberated, and the first anniversary celebration in Panjim was being witnessed by His Holiness." Here one sees a Divine purpose. Mangeshvar was then visited. Priests offered *pada puja* in all the temples he visited, one of which was at Concona where a *linga* is worshipped as Narayana.

### *Sringeri Temples Kumbhabhishekams:*

The months of February and March 1963 witnessed events in Sringeri, the uniqueness and sanctity of which could hardly be excelled. A *gopuram* had been put up over the entrance of the Sarada temple, renovation carried out to the Samkara Shrine and the Malahanikaresvara temple and an *adhishtanam* had been built near that of Sri Sachidananda Siva Abhinava Narasimha Bharati and in it a *murti* in marble of Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati had been installed behind a *bana linga*. All these were consecrated during this period. The special festivals were preceded by the usual annual festivals in the Sarada and Malahanikaresvara temple culminating with the car and floating festivals. Then followed on the 23rd February, the Sivaratri puja. The Jagadguru conducted the *Kumbhabhishekam* of the Sri Malahanikaresvara temple on the 28th February and those of the Samkara and Sarada temples and the new Guru *adhishtanam* on the 3rd March. The *Sahasra chandi yajna* which commenced on the 27th February concluded on the 3rd March with the offering of the *purnahuti* in the presence of the Jagadguru and the Maharaja of Mysore. Somesvaram

Narayana of Vidyaranyapuram conducted a *Chaturmasya yajna*. A lakh of devotees witnessed these festivals on the 3rd March and everyday thousands on thousands were fed. There were *Vedaparayana*, music concerts and *Puranapravachana* on all the days. The Samkara Seva Samiti and the Dharmadhikari association held their conferences, at one of which the Jagadgurn and Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar released some English and Sanskrit publications.

The distinguished visitors included the Maharaja of Mysore, Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Minister Viranna Gowda, judges and exjudges. and officials of Mysore State, the Heads of the Sringeri Sivaganga Math, the Hariharpur Math, the Sakatapuram (Bandigade) Math, and the Gayatri Pitha at Masulipatam, Sri Kasi Sacchidananda Sarasvati, Sri Bhashya Svamigal, Sri Sankarananda and his disciples and Sri Vidyaranya Bharati.

On May 29th 1963, the Jagadguru left Sringeri and reached Bangalore on June 3rd, where he declared open the magnificent building *Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mandir* and inaugurated the golden jubilee celebration of the Bharatiya Girvana Praudha Vidyabhivardini, or the College for advanced Sanskrit studies founded by the Paramaguru.

He returned to Sringeri for the *Chaturmasya*, *Ganapati Vidvat Sadas* and *Navaratri* celebrations, On Janurry 16, 1964, the Jagadguru commenced the *Kotinama archana* for Sri Sarada which concluded on the 20th with the *Lalita homa*. It is noteworthy that contributions for these *archanas* were received from bhaktas from across the seas. The Maharaja of Mysore was present on the occasion.

*Second tour (All India tour) :*

Leaving Sringeri on April 16th, the Acharya worshipped Sri Rshyasringa at Kigga and travelling though Shimoga reached Srirangapatna and then Mysore where he was entertained by the Maharaja in the palace, and blessed the foundation stone of the Kalyana bhavan and Arts centre to be attached to the Abhinava Samkaralayam.

*The meeting of the Sringeri and Dwaraka Jagadgurus:*

On May 2nd the Jagadguru Dwaraka Pitha visited the Samkara math, Bangalore, and was received by the Samkara Seva Samiti. Both the Jagadgurus worshipped at the Sarada and Samkara temples and addressed a large gathering in front of the math.

The Maharaja of Mysore paid his respects to the Acharya at his Bangalore camp both prior to and after taking over as Governor of Madras.

On May 10th the Salem Municipality welcomed the Acharya who proceeded to Kalady for the Samkara Jayanti. At Kalady he blessed the foundation stone for a hall to be raised by the Samkara Educational Trust to house a library, research halls, etc. After visiting several villages in Kerala he camped in Cochin where the late Mr. Cuttat, the Swiss Ambassador, paid his respects to the Acharya. At Ernakulam, the aged Maharaja of Cochin paid his respects. He then stayed in Coimbatore for a month and travelling through Tiruppur, Udampet, Kolinjivadi, Karur, Dindigul, Batlaguntu, Melmangalam, Periyakulam, Srivilliputtur, Rajapalayam and Sankaranayanar koil, he reached Courtallam for the *Chaturmasya*. The *Chandi homa* and other pujas that were conducted there were attended by the Maharajas of Mysore and Travancore and the Maharani of Travancore. At the invitation of the royal family, the Acharya went to Trivandrum where also a *Chandi homa* was performed. The *Navaratri* celebration at Kallidaikurichi was a grand function. Tirunelveli celebrated the *Vardhanti* of the Acharya and entertained him for several weeks. The Acharya was enthusiastically received by the Jeer Svamis of Vanamamalai and Tirukurungudi at their respective maths—an event as unique as it was significant in the religious history of South India. Then to Trivandrum in November as stated above. The Acharya blessed the foundation stone of a Samkara math in the Kerala capital. Then the itinerary included Varkala, Quilon, Kottarakare, Punalur, Aryankavu, Shencottah, Sambhavar Vadakarai, Sundarapandipuram, Tenkasi, Ambasamudram, Tirunelveli, Srivaikuntam, Tiruchendur, Tuticorin, where the foundation stone for a Samkara math was laid, Kovilpatti, Ettayapuram, Mandapam and Ramesvaram where as usual special worship



was offered in the temple and the sacred bath at the confluence of the seas was taken. He performed a special *yajna* for the relief of the people who had suffered from the ravages of the terrible storm that had afflicted the island and donated Rs. 1001 for poor relief. Then in February 1965, Palni where after worship in the temple, he declared open the M. N. Ramaswami Aiyar Dharmasala.

#### *Sringeri and Puri Jagadgurus meet:*

On March 13th, 1965, in his camp at Madurai, the Acharya received the Head of the Puri math, Sri Niranjan Dev Tirtha. Both the Acharyas addressed crowded meetings in the Sri Minakshi temple. A *Chandi homa* was performed and Rs. 5001 was granted towards the erection of a Kalyana Mahal by the Vaidik Samaj. Then at Sivaganga, the Acharya consecrated the murti of Sri Samkara.

#### *Three Jagadgurus meet :*

The Acharya reached Kalady for Samkara Jayanti celebration. The Heads of the Paschimamnaya Dwaraka Pitha and of the Purvam-naya Puri-Jagannath Pitha were given a rousing and respectful reception when they arrived at the sacred birth place of Sri Samkara. The three Jagadgurus conferred in private, worshipped in the temples and witnessed the *Chandi homa*. They attended the *Vidvat sadas* and the conference called by the Samkara Seva Samiti and blessed the huge audience that had gathered to witness this unprecedented event. After Kalady, Parli, Coimbatore, Satyamangalam, Erode, Mettur Dam, Kodumudi, Karur, Sholavandan, Tenkaral, Kodaikanal etc., were visited and from Melmangalam the Acharya went to Gunnavaramkottai, the birth place of Sri Sacchidananda Bharati I, At Nerur in the holy presence of the Acharya the *Kumbhabhishekam* of the Siva temple adjoining the *adhishthanam* of Sri Sadasivendra Brahman was performed on a scale worthy of the sanctity of the place, (July 1st, 1965). The Acharya conducted puja at the *adhishthanam*. The Municipal councils of Tiruchirapalli and Srirangam welcomed the Acharya when he visited the twin cities for five days commencing on July 6th. He inaugurated the renovation work of the Tayumanavar (Matrbhutesvara) temple and also visited the Industrial areas. The year's *Chaturmasya* was conducted at Salem. Sri Jayachamaraja Wadeyar, Maharaja of Mysore and Governor of Madras visited Salem and paid his respects to the Acharya.

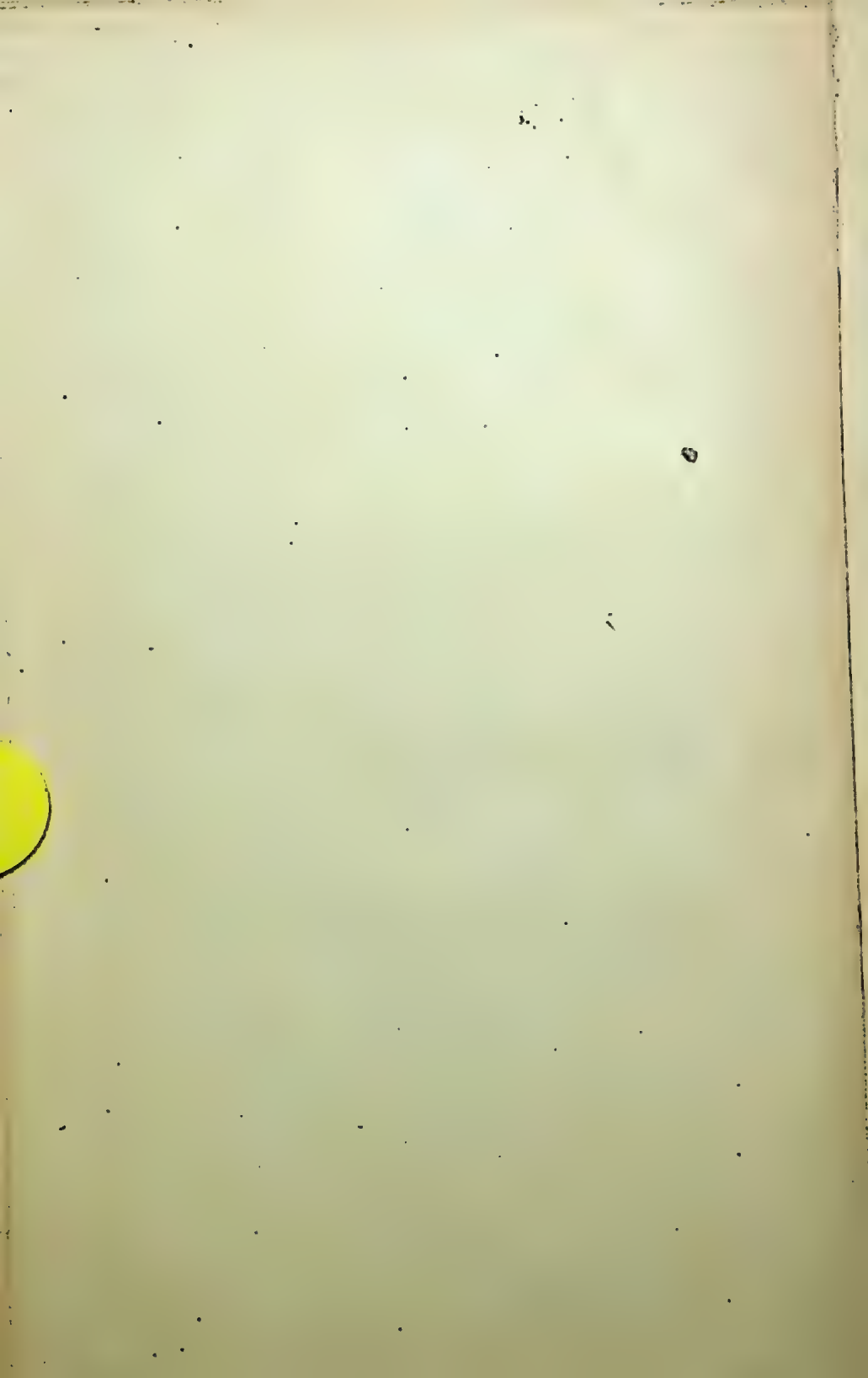
*Eighty-two days of spiritual fervour in Madras :*

After leaving Salem, the Acharya halted for a day at Ranipet and reached Madras on September 20th, 1965. The Sringeri Navaratri Sahasrachandi and Atirudram Committee (SRINSA) under its president T. L. Venkatarama Aiyar, ex-Judge, Supreme Court, welcomed him at the T'nagar math. On the 22nd after worshipping Sri Kapali at Mylapore, the Acharya Reached 'Navasuja' the residence of V. Vaidyasubramania Aiyar. He performed the *aradhana* of his guru for three days commencing on the 24th and the *Navaratri puja* from the 25th with the usual *darbar* at night and special pujas both morning and night, *parayanam*, *suvasini* and *kannika pujas*. The pandal was exquisitely decorated and illuminated. A special shamiana was erected in the 'SRINSA' colony with four gates representing the four *matha amnyas* with their respective *mahavakyas*, for the *yajnas* - *Sahasrachandi* (Sep. 30 - Oct. 4) and *Atirudra* (Oct. 12 - 23); the *purna-ahutis* on both the occasions were done in the presence of the Acharya amidst several thousands of disciples, both men and women, all charged with high spiritual fervour. The usual *Satachandi yajnam* financed by Gurubhakta-shudamani R. Subba Rao was also included. Other functions included *Siva Sahasranama Koti archana*, *Vishnu Sahasranama Laksha archana*, *Lakshmi Laksharchana* and *Padma homa*, *Purusha Sukta japam* and *homam*, *Sri Sukta japam* and *homam* and the *jayanti* of Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati. *Kanakabhishekam* was performed to Sri Sarada and a *Vidvat sadas* was held for three days. On the dipavali day, the Acharya's *vardhanti* was celebrated with devotion and fervour. On the 23rd a largely attended meeting of the citizens of Madras was held at 'Navasuja', the Maharaja of Mysore (Governor of Madras) presiding. The Acharya handed over to Chief Minister Bhaktavatsalam the gold coins used for the *Kanakabhishekam* on the previous day and Rs. 5000 as contribution towards the National Defence Fund. Gurubhakta Siromani Vaidyasubramania Aiyar gifted the plot where the yajnas were performed for a prayer hall to be erected and named the *Sringeri Jagadguru Pravachana Mandiram* with shrines to Sri Sarada, Sri Samkara and Sri Ganapati. Principal K. R. Sundararajan of the Indian Institute of Engineering Technology donated a plot in Kodambakkam for the construction of a temple to Sri Sarada. Before the Acharya left Madras the foundation stones of these two buildings were laid. Raja Muthia Chettiyar,



Sri Sri Jagadguru Abhinava  
Vidya Tirtha Mahaswamikal





who was an active participant in these functions, released a pictorial souvenir of the Acharya's engagements. The Acharya visited also the Samkara math at George Town, conducted the installation of a *murti* in the Sri Jalakandesvara temple in the I. I. T. compound, Triplicane, Mylapore, the Gurukulam at Abhiramapuram, and the Handloom Weaving Factory at Anakaputtur, near Pallavaram, where he installed a Siva linga in the Bhavani Samkara temple. Aptly did Vaidyasubramania Aiyar observe at the citizens' meeting: "It is most significant that with the proposed Prayer Hall in Raja Annamalaipuram and the Sarada Temple in Kodambakkam, and the existing Sringeri Sarada Maths in T'nagar and George Town, all the four points of the city are covered by institutions for spiritual advancement spreading the lustre and divinity of Lord Chandramouleeswara and Goddess Saradambal and the blessings of His Holiness the Jagadguru on Sringeri Sarada Peetham on the citizens of Madras."

After Madras on his way to Kanchi, the Acharya blessed the foundation stone for a Ganapati temple in the factory premises of W. S. Insulators of India at Porur where he was welcomed by N. S. Seturaman and the American Engineers. At Kanchi he stayed in the Sringeri Math and worshipped in all the temples. Then to Arkonam before he proceeded to Andhra Pradesh. He visited and worshipped in the temples at Pushpagiri, Cuddapah, Prodattur, Allagudda, Ahobalam, Nandyal, Adoni, Alampur, Gadwal and Wanaparti, accompanied throughout a large part of the journey by the Head of the Siddhesvara Pitha of Courtallam and Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao. Hyderabad gave him a rousing reception headed by the Governor, the Ministers, the Chief Secretary to Government, the Mayor, Svami Trivikrama Ramananda Bharati of Courtallam, Raja Venkat Rao Limbekar, Pappu Suryanarayana, ex-Governor B. Ramakrishna Rao, and others. On January 6th, 1966, Svami Chidananda, President of the Divine Life Society, had the Acharya's *darsan*. The places and institutions he visited included the E. M. E. centre at Bolaram, the Bharat Heavy Electricals, Standard Engineering Company; the Venkatesa temple at Surrornagar and the Lakshminarayana and Radhakrishna temples at Secunderabad.

Passing through Mahbubnagar and Umamahesvarnagar the Acharya reached Srisailem on January 26th, performed the

*Kumba-bhishekam* of the Sri Mallikarjuna and Sri Bhramaramba temples and received the *Kanikka* offered by the temple committee. The Acharya blessed the foundation stone for a Samkara math and an agrahara at Srisailam.

Reaching Guntur he installed on February 9th, Sri Sarada in the temple erected by Polisetti Sitaramanjaneyalu. For the contemplated Samkara Sadanam the foundation was laid. The Acharya performed Sivaratri puja, and was present at the *Satachundi* and *Maharudra yajnas*. He visited several places in the city including the Hindu College and received an address from the Municipality. Heads of pithas from Masulipatnam, Courtallam, Gudivada, Pushpagiri etc., had his *darsan*. Then to Tenali and again to Guntur where he held a *Vidvat Sadas*. After a brief visit to Hyderabad, he proceeded to Vemalavada where he performed Sankara jayanti and held a *Vidvat sadas* (21 to 25 April). He worshipped at the Sri Rajarajesvara temple and blessed the foundation stone for a *Gita mandir*.

This rapid but rather sketchy narration has taken us to the end of April 1966, and it will be convenient to stop here. The Jagadguru visited several other places in Andhra, then entered Maharashtra, received a great welcome at Nagpur and proceeded to Madhya Pradesh. At Bhopal, the Governor, the Chief Minister and prominent people welcomed him with due respect. After visiting Indore and Dhar, the capitals of two former Princely States, he reached Ujjain for the *Vyasa puja* which fell on July 2nd. The holy city of Sri Mahakalesvara gave him quite a rousing reception. Maharaja Madhava Rao Sinde received him at the Gopal Mandir. The Acharya camped in the historical Kaliadeh palace for the *Chaturmasya*. *Navaratri* will be performed at Gwalior and the Jagadguru is expected to arrive at Delhi early in November 1966 where a magnificent reception awaits him—a reception worthy of his exalted position and the historic capital of the Indian Union.

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Several places visited by His Holiness may have been omitted in this narration for which the reader's indulgence is requested.



ENVOI <sup>12</sup>

In an address on the greatness of Sri Samkaracharya, the Svami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Mission expressed admiration that a "single individual whose only companion was his vast intellect and deep sympathy going the length and breadth of India and conquering its mind and heart.....established an empire of the spirit, of love and of lofty spiritual idealism". Later on says the Svami, "Being a man of immense practicality and possessed of rare organising abilities Shankara took steps to ensure the continuity of his great work by setting up ten orders of monks—the Paramahansa Parivrajakas....and establishing four monastic centres at four corners of India and entrusting them to the care of monks noted for their intellect, character and vision. The location of these centres—at Sringeri in the south, at Puri in the east, at Dwaraka in the west and at Badrinath in the north—reveals his far-seeing genius as also his vision of the geographical and cultural unity of India."

Two ideas stand out in the above passages—one that Sri Samkara established an *empire*—not a political empire which would crumble on the onslaught of changing political doctrines but an *empire of lofty spiritual idealism* which will abide for all times, and the other that the sway of this *empire of the spirit* had its foci on the four *amnaya pithas* at Sringeri, Dwaraka, Badri and Puri.

That spiritual idealism which is connoted by the word *Dharma* is supreme over political sovereignty, is not just a figurative expression; it has been in our racial consciousness. When under Vidyanarya's guidance and with his blessings, Harihara and Bukka established the great empire of Vijayanagar they recognised that their temporal power was influenced, if not controlled, by the spiritual power of the Sringeri Sarada Pitha. That the common folk might recognise and honour the supremacy of Dharma, they invested the holy seat of Dharma in Sringeri and its Acharya with several insignia bespeaking regal splendour and authority. The *Vyakhyana-cum-Dharma Pitha* at Sringeri came to be designated the *Vyakhyana-cum-Dharma Simhasana*. And when His Holiness gives us *darsan* adorned

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12 Reproduction of an article bearing the caption *Our Homage* contributed by the author to *Flowers of Devotion* published by the Akhila Bharatha Samkara Seva Samithi, (November 1964)

with diadem and robes, or is carried on a golden palanquin with several insignia he, in his person, represents to us the supremacy of *Sanatana Dharma*.

This emperor occupying the *Vyakhyana Simhasana* is a *tyagi*, a *parivrajaka* or wandering monk. Like everything related to Sri Samkara there is a *samanvaya*,—an integration of these two different and opposing ideas. The wandering monk of Sringeri rules over the kingdom of the Spirit.

His Holiness is now on a second tour radiating grace and benediction. And when we approach Him we feel that the cob-webs in our minds are swept away and our mental and spritual malaise is cured and that by His teachings and very often by a mere look He has made better men of us.

It has also been said of Sri Samkara that "he gathered up the scattered cultural and spiritual energies of the people and raised their voltage ten fold." His successors have continued this work. To give a few examples: The temple has always been the focus round which gather the socio-religious activities of the people. It is a matter of prime importance to His Holiness, the present Acharya, that our temples are preserved unsullied and their dominating spiritual importance recognised. To Him the temple is not just an architectural monument and the sculptures within it just plastic expression. Not that he is not sensitive to their aesthetic value, but to him they vibrate with real life, grace and power. There are in our country splendid monuments, but few that can rival the Vidya Samkara temple in Sringeri, which with its grandeur and repose, reflects the lofty spiritual experiences of the Acharyas of Sringeri. A store house of joyful ornamentation and statues expressive of a whole gamut of feelings of grace, of benediction, of tenderness and again of immense strength, this temple is a veritable epic in stone signifying all that is great in the realisation of the sages of Sringeri in the mantra and yoga sastras. The small but delectable shrines in Kalady built early in this century meticulously conform to the requirements of the mantra sastra. This penchant for temple architecture is shared by His Holiness, our Acharya. His tour is memorable for his active participation in the consecration of several temples either renovated or newly built. In Sringeri, he has made additions to the old

temples, and is planning to build a few more. We can boldly assert that for an understanding of the *silpa sastra*, one has only to converse with His Holiness, and with the inspiration and back-ground so gained study the Vidya Samkara temple; there will be no need for him to pour over old books or attend discussions on the art of temple construction. Whenever His Holiness visits a reputed shrine, and stands in the sanctum, he is absorbed within himself, and who can measure the depth of his experience at the time! His radiant face, eyes closed with just a touch of smile in the slightly parted lips, reflects the grace and the *Kala* of the Deity in front of him. If one is privileged to be present there at the time one gets a soul-rewarding experience.

Music to His Holiness is a *sadhana*. He does not tolerate anything cheap or bizarre that goes under the respectable name of folk art. Music again is not for his personal entertainment. It must be performed in the presence of Sri Sarada and Sri Chandramaulisvara and the repertoire and rendering alike must be impeccable as the flowers that are kept for the *archana*. When a virtuoso renders a rare *kriti*, and throwing his soul into the rendering, evokes an atmosphere of, what one may describe as musical mystique, His Holiness's silent intonation of the *namavali* blends with the song, and the *pushpanjali* blends with the *gitanjali*. It is all a soul elevating example of *nadopasana*. Both by precept and example does His Holiness convey to us the message of our great art. Many among his predecessors have been great composers.

His Holiness's passion for Samskrit can hardly be excelled, and the institutions in Sringeri, Bangalore, Kalady and several other places under the direction of the math bear eloquent testimony to it. His Holiness is not unmindful of the needs of the times. The Kalady Samkara College and the Educational Trust have for their object the integration of indigenous culture and the requirements of modern scholarship.

We live in an age of science and democracy. Science has kindled in us a spirit of inquiry and is opening up newer and newer fields of knowledge, while democracy seeks to place in our hands responsibilities hitherto unknown. The intellectual force of science and the social force of democracy, which function on three fronts, viz.



politics, economics and civic and social life are beset with dangerous possibilities, unless all this power is mellowed by a sense of stability, humanism and purpose. This is just what His Holiness stresses in his speeches and conversations during his visits to factories, workshops, power-houses, municipal and civic bodies and educational institutions. He seldom forgets to impress on his hearers the deep and abiding religious consciousness that is in us and should find expression in coordinated effort and dedication in selfless service so that man may not exploit man for self-aggrandizement. Search for *abhyudaya* is alright but it must be leavened with a desire for *nishreyasa* also—this is a message which only a sage like him who practices self-control and self-transcendence (*indriya samyama* and *tyaga*) can give.

Intellectuals from different lands—from the United States, Britain, Holland, Scandinavia, France, Switzerland, Iran and Japan have sought interviews with His Holiness and to them His message has been: "Try to realise your true nature and slowly try to raise yourself to the height of the divinity in you." To the extent individuals raise themselves to their true spiritual stature, to the same extent they raise the nation and humanity. To a distinguished American who asked His Holiness for a message of peace to our world distract with distrust and cold wars, his prompt answer was: "Practise the virtues that your religion preaches. The universal truths enunciated by the earlier religious leaders all over the world are practical guide posts for good living today, and that if we take them as such there need be no conflict." If only the world will hearken to him a new era of peace and well being is sure to dawn.

## CHAPTER TEN

### ADMINISTRATION

The Sringeri samsthanam grew round the nucleus provided by the land grants of Harihara I, Bukka I and Harihara II. Successive sovereigns, and the British administrators maintained the 'semi-sovereign' status of the samsthanam. When in the wake of political changes the local authorities infringed upon the rights of the samsthanam, and when unruly and unsocial elements created disturbances, the rulers came to its help and even restrained their local officers from interfering with its internal management.

The list of holdings in the samsthanam villages, the grants and pattas relating to them had undergone frequent examination before A.D. 1653, when Sivappa Nayak, acting at the request of the Acharya, had a full survey made of the villages, the fields demarcated, and the differences between the minor inamdars and the wargdars or leaseholders composed. When the British Commission in Mysore introduced fresh inam and revenue survey and settlements in the State, the Jagadguru 'actuated by a spirit of enlightened liberality,'—to quote the Government Memorandum—'was anxious to give his jaghir tenants the benefits of a fixed and definite tenure by the introduction of the Inam and Revenue Survey Settlements'.....which 'would be a boon to the ryots and minor Inamdars of Sringeri and would be the means of putting an end to much needless litigation.' In 1887, the Survey Superintendent in Mysore was directed to recommend the nature of the settlement that was necessary. In June 1888 the Jagadguru expressed a desire to confer right to property on tenants if the authorised assessment in kind or in money is paid, and in September of the same year, agreed to forego assessment in kind, so far as the matha was concerned if satisfactory settlement could be made of the interests of the inamdars and wargdars. Again at the Jagadguru's request the Mysore Government enacted on December 12, 1897, the Sringeri Jagir Inam Settlement Regulation after obtaining the previous sanction of the Government of India. The rules and notifications under the Regulation bear testimony to the anxiety of the Mysore and India Governments not to impair in any way the

rights and privileges of the samsthanam. After the survey and settlement of 1900, the position was as follows. The tiller was the khatedar, full owner with proprietary rights of alienation, transfer etc., and the rights of inheritance. The grant of darkhast was guided by the Land Revenue Code of Mysore. The samsthanam did not cultivate any land with hired labour for its own benefit. There had been no case of eviction.

Old records speak to the samsthanam having given money to ryots to bring forest lands under cultivation and lay out areca plantations, and when these lands began to yield, they were given to the ryots. Indigent ryots were fed and clothed. The old system of collection in kind and cash had been abolished, and the samsthanam was content with receiving the bare khandayam or land tax in cash from the tillers who became absolute owners, and this was certainly very different from 'assessment.' Nor had the samsthanam demanded any compensation for thus giving away the lands. This voluntary act of Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrismha Bharati had rescued tenants from 'bondage' and given them, along with full proprietary rights, a sense of security. The land revenue administration of the samsthanam was then based on the Mysore Land Revenue Code.

Garden lands affected with pests were allowed remission at four annas in the rupee. The areca and paddy from lands classified as inam in the samsthanam accounts and the cash rent pertained to the respective temples shown under separate khatas, or holdings in the samsthanam muzrai accounts. In consonance with the desire expressed by Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati, the Mysore Government authorised in 1941, the disposal under darkhast rules of waste lands in the samsthanam villages and the conferment of rights of property on the buyers.

### *Welfare Activities*

Some major items of expenditure amounted on an average to Rs. 1,25,000; that on educational and cultural activities and feeding establishments to more than a lakh of rupees. Provision was made annually for rural improvements, tank repairs, and maintenance of roads.



In 1841-2, the Jagadguru nominated an amildar with civil and criminal jurisdiction so as to bring the administration of justice in line with Mysore. The samsthanam then gradually and voluntarily surrendered to the Government its authority pertaining to the administration of law and order.

Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati desired that a senior officer of Mysore service should be in charge of the revenue administration of the samsthanam. This functionary is designated officer-in-charge, and functions under the general control of the Deputy Commissioner, Chikmagalur District. The entire charges of this establishment are met by the samsthanam.

In 1947, the samsthanam introduced the Land Mortgage Bank scheme, and issues agricultural loans at low rates of interest. Kadim tenants got remission during years of scanty rainfall. The samsthanam granted special loans for improvement of Temple inam lands in addition to the takavi loans that Government ordinarily issued.

In 1887, Sringeri town was constituted a municipality under the control of the Sringeri Deputy Amildar. The samsthanam discontinued the levy of sayer. The Municipality was authorised to levy octroi, the income being divided equally between the samsthanam and the municipality; and after 1893 the samsthanam waived this half share of the octroi income, which was later spent on a dispensary and on improvement of sanitation. From January 1927, the major villages of the samsthanam came under panchayat administration. The samsthanam entrusted the District Board of Kadur (Chikmagalur) with the management of communications, public health, education and economic development, but continued to grant liberal subsidies.

The number of pupils in Primary and Middle Schools per 1,000 of the population in Sringeri samsthanam is higher than in Koppa taluk and the average for Mysore State. The samsthanam gave the Municipal High School a commodious building in good repair, and at the Guru's commands, the Guru Seva Samiti, Sringeri, donated to the school Rs. 28,000.

The programme of welfare schemes put through in Sringeri was comparable with any in the progressive States of India. 'Feudalism' there never was, and of 'medievalism' what little there was had been shed.

The new Mysore Act has abolished the 'jagir' and the Jagadguru is to be given a liquidated *tasdik*<sup>1</sup> A jagirdar is one who holds lands as a reward for services rendered or expected to be rendered to the State. In this sense, the Jagadguru is not a jagirdar ; the lands that he holds, in the first place, represent the reverence and devotion of the rulers, and do not constitute any reward, and secondly they are not meant for his personal enjoyment ; they were given for his maintenance so that he might pursue his spiritual ministration unfettered by personal cares, maintain the yatis and men of learning and other attendants who reside with him, and look after the seats of learning, temples and houses of charity. Now that we are a Republican State the duty devolves on the citizens to honour and foster the institutions that embody our great traditions of culture and spirituality. The monasteries founded by Samkara are the great heritage of the nation representing, to quote Nehru again, 'the dominant philosophical outlook of Hinduism to-day.' We neglect them at the risk of losing our soul.<sup>2</sup>

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1 *Tasdik*—allowance to temples, charities etc.

2 *The Discovery of India*, pp. 181-3.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Before the fourteenth century, the Acharyas and their monastic disciples lived in hermitages spread all round modern Sringeri, Simhapura, Vasisthasrama, Kigga and Kalasa, often amidst Jaina and Pasupata Saiva centres. The agrahara of Sringeri, together with that of Vidyaranyaapuram, took definite shape in the time of Harihara II, who desired that 'the Dharmapitha of Srngapura should have a central matha building and an agrahara for Brahmans, who attend to the worship of Sri Malahanikaresvara, Sri Vidyasamkara and Sri Sarada and to the performance of rites prescribed in the Vedas and Sastras.' From such beginnings grew up Sringeri town (13°25' N. Lat., 75°19' E. Long.) on the left bank of the Tunga, fifteen miles south-west of Koppa. The long main street with a loop on one side encircles a hill on which stands the temple of Malahani-karesvara. On the river bank are the main buildings of the matha, the old building and the new one called Chandramaulisvara Totti. The pathasalas, library and the samsthanam offices are housed in these buildings; and the principal temples are situated within this enclosure. Several Brahmana houses have shrines in the central yard which are *samadhis* of past Acharyas. There are about the place a hundred and twenty shrines, large and small, including a Jain basti. To the north of the matha buildings are the guest houses.

In a jungle clearing known as Narasimhavana on the opposite bank is the asrama of the Jagadguru where he resides for about eight months in the year. Close to it are shrines dedicated to Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati and Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati.

In the puja cabinets of the matha are representations of several Divine Forms, such as bana lingas, salagramas, yantras, and bronze idols. The principal murtis are Ratnagarbha Ganapati, Chandramaulisvara linga, Sri Yantra and Sarada.

The image of Ganapati in the puja of the Acharya is partly crystal and partly ruby—hence Ratnagarbha—worshipped as a



representation of the Pranava. He is the remover of obstacles and bestower of wisdom.

The crest of the *sphatika* (crystal) *linga* of Chandramaulisvara is self-radiant like the moon, a unique phenomenon not observed in any other *linga*—the moon representing *jñāna* and bliss. *Linga* means a symbol; here it stands for the pillar of Light that the 'knowers of the Self' experience in the cave of the heart.' The *linga* cannot be said to have a form, nor is it quite formless; in its shape neither a beginning nor an end can be marked; the *sphatika linga* has no colour but takes the colour of the object presented before it; and hence it is the most appropriate symbol of the Infinite Brahman without form and attributes, but by the play of *maya*, assumes various forms to bless the devotee.

An aspect of the Brahman conceived with form and attributes is Dakshinamurti, the embodiment of Bliss and Wisdom supreme. Of radiantly white complexion conceived as seated under the fig tree (representing *samsāra*) with hairs matted on the crown displaying the moon (conveying the notion of ageless or eternal wisdom), He is represented as displaying in his hands the jar of the nectar of immortality, the book of knowledge, a rosary and chinmudra. The emblems stand for wisdom, and the mudra for awareness of the identity of the Jiva with Brahman, the oneness of Advaita. He is hailed as the Giver of *medha* and *prajña*—hence *Medha Dakshinamurti*. At the feet of This 'Youth of Eternity' are Sanaka and other sages.

The same concept is realised in another representation of the Supreme, now as the Mother of the Universe. Sri Sarada displays the identical symbols of rosary, jar of the nectar of immortality, book of knowledge and Chinmudra. The beads of the rosary are the subtle letters or the *bijas* from which gross forms emanate. She is the Absolute, all other Divine Forms embodying one or other of the *gunas* are but Her aspects. She is the Trimurti and Their Saktis,—Uma, Lakshmi and Vani; Vama, Jyeshtha and Raudri; Iccha Jñāna and Kriya Saktis, etc., and transcends them all; Her grandeur is impossible to conceive.

She is seated on the Sri Chakra, the grand mystic symbol of the Universe (both the macrocosm and the microcosm) and its Divine Cause. The Chakra has two sets of triangles, one of four called



**Sri Chaturmurti Vidyeshvara**  
(Sculpture): Sri Vidyasamkar flanked by  
Sri Bharati Tirtha and Sri Vidyaranya)





Siva Chakras and the other of five called Sakti Chakras. The Bindu or point in the centre is the abode of Kamesvara (Nishkala Siva) and Kamesvari or Lalita (His Sakala aspect) in abheda (undifferentiated) union. In these nine chakras are the Yoginis or Saktis presiding over the tattvas and the vrittis (or attitudes and modifications) of the mind. They are Avarana Devatas, because they veil Pure Consciousness (cit) and project the appearance of the universe of mind and matter, sound and form, and give to what is *purna* (undifferentiated and unlimited) the appearance of *apurna* (differentiated and limited). The Avarana Devatas are but rays of the central Luminary, the Devi, and in worship is conceived as being absorbed in Her; in other words the sadhaka rises above all the vrittis and identifies himself with the Devi in the Bindu in whom as the Supreme Essence the static or absolute and dynamic or manifesting aspects coalesce (*Prakasavimarsa-parabrahmasvarupa*). She is the highest Bliss (*Paramrta sakti*). Sri Lalita Raja Rajesvari, who abides in the Bindu, is but another aspect of Sri Sarada and is represented as holding a noose, and an elephant goad in her upper arms and a sugar-cane bow and five flowery arrows in Her lower arms. The noose and the goad stand respectively for desire (*raga*) and aversion (*dvesa*), the bow for the mind and the arrows for the sensory organs. By meditating on these emblems, the devotee in the *pravrtti marga* (path of enjoyment) acquires all the good things of life, while he in the *nivrtti marga* (path of liberation) subdues desire and hate, and his mind and senses, and is released from all bondage. This particular mode of realising Brahma Vidya is called Sri Vidya.

Sri Samkara, the Jnanamurti, incarnated as the embodiment of Sri Dakshinamurti or Sri Sarada. Hence the prominence given to these particular Divine Forms.

Another Divine form much in worship in this *pltha* is Sri Lakshmi Nrsimha. One of the modes of plastically representing the Paramatman is to depict Him as the face of the lion; the human body represents jiva. This Lion-Man aspect of God, therefore, represents the union of the jiva and the Paramatman. He is said to be the Samkarshana form of the Virat Purusa. Samkarshana means 're-absorber'; He absorbs or destroys the malas or taints of the soul represented by the demon king Hiranyakasipu. Note the distinctive Saiva features indicative of absorption in Nrsimha—white complexion

expressive of sattva, three eyes, yoga posture in perfect poise and all vrittis suspended, and the weapon pinaka which represents the cosmic mind working through Time which, however, is kept in restraint. He also holds the chakra and shows the vara and abhaya mudras; chakra is the luminous wheel which controls the rta (or the great law or the dynamic aspect of Truth) of the cosmos. Lakshmi, at His side, is His Bhuti. Ananta, who spreads his hood over the Lord's head, is the embodiment of the Universal Consciousness (chaitanya) in the avyakta or causal or unmanifested stage, hence also called Sesa, because he remains when manifestation is dissolved.

The Vishnu salagrama is another murta-amurta form expressive of the *virat* aspect of the Parabrahman.

It is not possible within the limits of this chapter to go into the symbolism of all the murtis in worship in the pitha. Enough has been said to indicate that in ordaining the worship of the Saguna forms, Sri Samkara aimed at taking the worshipper from Isvara with attributes ultimately to the realisation of the Brahman without attributes. And his illustrious successors have been carrying on the *pūja* of these saguna forms for the good of the world.

And now to the temples connected with the pitha.

### SARADA TEMPLE:

Coeval with the setting up of the monastic foundation in Sringeri is the temple of Sri Sarada, presiding Goddess of the pitha. Originally it was an unpretentious shrine with a murti of Sri Sarada made of sandalwood and installed over a Sri Chakra that Sri Samkara carved on a rock. Sri Bharati Tirtha and Sri Vidyaranya had a temple built, similar in structure to the other temples in Malnad and the West Coast; the framework in wood standing on a plinth, and covered with a tiled and gabled roof over pillars and joists all of wood. Sri Vidyaranya substituted for the old sandalwood murti the present one in gold. Sri Sacchidananda Bharati II (1705—41) instituted the navaratri festival which continues to be the chief festival in the temple. In 1791, the Maratha hordes of Parasuram Bhau looted Sringeri, and desecrated the temple by displacing the image and carrying away the temple jewels and vessels Sri Sacchidanand

Bharati III immediately reconsecrated the Goddess with funds provided by Tipu Sultan. Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati, who started the renovation of the temple, engaged artizans and sculptors from the Chettinad, who raised the present structure in fine polished granite. In May 1916, Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati consecrated the new temple.

The temple is in the Dravidian style with entrances at east, north and south. Passing through the eastern or main entrance, one passes through two mandapas, one on either side raised on a plinth. The raised navaranga or mahamandapa has two rows of four massive pillars. Sri Durga or Mahishamardani with eight hands, Sri Raja Rajesvari, a Devi holding the emblems of deer and drum and exhibiting *abhaya* and *varada* mudras, and another holding rosary and lotus and showing *varada* and *abhaya* mudras are four outstanding pillar sculptures. There are two dvarapalakas. A small sukhnasi leads to the sanctum. Sanctified by the worship of a line of Acharyas of the highest purity and loftiest devotion and unsurpassed mantric powers, the murti of Sarada radiates peace, grace and blessing which every devotee who opens his heart to them receives in abundance.

Sri Sarada within the sanctum and Sri Raja Rajesvari and Sri Durga in the mandapa are but three modes of conceiving the Absolute in a saguna form—here as the Sovereign Matrix of the universe in Her samashti (or collective) aspect, beyond the three gunas—as Sat-Chit-Ananda rupini. The other two Devis represent the vyashti aspect.

In the prakara are shrines to Sri Ganesa and Sri Bhuvanesvari. There are also the silver and bronze images of Sarada which are taken out during festivals and processions.

Under the commands of the present Acharya an elegant gopuram has been put up over the entrance so designed as to be able to withstand the fury of the Malnad monsoon rains.

In front of the temple is a lofty dipastambha about 35 feet in height surmounted by a figure with folded hands.



## VIDYASAMKARA TEMPLE

According to tradition, the Vidya Sam kara temple was built in the year *Bahudhanya* or *Saka* 1260 corresponding to A. D. 1338. It is a unique monument built completely of stone, unique because it combines both Hoysala (Chalukya) and Dravida architectural features. The outline of the vimana and the presence of a sukhānasi with a superstructure are the chief Hoysala features, while the tiers in the vimana and the formation of the pillars in the front mandapa are characteristically Dravidian. The structure which stands on a raised plinth at the loop of the river and commands a magnificent view from the hills and their slopes all round, is more or less a rectangle with apsidal east—west ends. In the western half is the garbhagrha with its sukhānasi; on either side of the latter is a shrine—of Vidya Ganapathi in the south and of Mahishamardani in the north, each with an ardhmandapa in front. On the other three sides of the garbhagrha are shrines to Brahma with Sarasvati in the south, Vishnu with Lakshmi in the west and Mahesvara with Uma in the north. All these shrines form a *pancayatana*. The north-south transept in front of the three east-facing shrines continues as the circumambulatory round the other three shrines also.

In the eastern half of the structure is a mandapa with twelve pillars, huge monoliths of a composite character carrying large animal figures on their fronts, and such other Dravidian features as subsidiary pilasters and sculptured faces with heavy projecting corbels on top. These pillars are marked each by one of the twelve signs of the zodiac in their regular order, and are, therefore, called rasi pillars. They are arranged in such a manner that the rays of the sun fall on them in the order of the solar months. On the floor is a large circle marked with converging lines to indicate the direction of the shadows. The frontal figure of each pillar is a large rearing lion with one or more round stone balls inside its gaping mouth which can be rotated inside but not taken out, a feature found in many Vijayanagar and Nayak temples in the south. The ceiling over this central part is raised much higher than the adjoining lateral and frontal sides, and this raised clerestory extends up to the sukhānasi. The ankana between the pillars and the outer walls of this closed mandapa has a roof made of two stages, one lower than the other. Thus the entire roof on top in front of the sukhānasi is in three almost flat terraces, the lowermost terrace going round the bays of

the spire to cover the circumambulatory round the sanctum. The central ceiling, about eight feet square, is an exquisite piece of workmanship with a central pendant lotus bud against a background of five whorls of petals, and on the four sides are four pecking parrots. This central compartment is surrounded by eight square ceiling panels, the whole forming the navaranga ceiling usual in Hoysala temples.

The closed mandapa has three entrances; one on the east which is the main entrance, one on the north, and the third on the south. Symmetrical with these three, are three other entrances—north, west and south—on the shrine part, each giving access to the Mahesvara, Vishnu and Brahma shrines. Otherwise the continuous wall, which goes all round the structure is divided into panels, each flanked by pilasters and ornamented with sculptures, kumbhapancarams and other motifs. The entrances are reached by two flights of steps, one higher than the other.

The superstructure over the sukhanasi has a cell over the roof level, and further up, takes the form of a hull-shaped roof with a longitudinal ridge on top with kirtimukha in front. Below the kirtimukha and over the entrance of the cell is a niche marking the second storey of the sukhanasi, the cell of which forms an antarala to the cell in the hollow vimana which corresponds to a shrine on the first floor. Further up, the vimana is hollow, with monolithic piers and cross beams forming the internal framework of the superstructure up to the point of the sikhara. Externally the superstructure rises in three stages, each virtually square in plan with stellate projections marking thereby three storeys or talas as in Dravida vimanas. On the four corners over the topmost tala are four nandis again a Dravidian feature. The sikhara is globoid, more than a semi-dome (not strictly of an amalaka) truncated at the bottom, and has on each of its four sides, a kirtimukha carrying on top a metallic finial, while at the apex is placed the usual patika and mahapadma supporting the principal kalasa or stupa. The rest of the roof is made up of sloping channelled slabs placed transversely along the length.

The six doorways on the outer wall are flanked by dvarapalakas. On the jamb is a river-goddess and on the lintel is Gajalakshmi. Of

the six pairs of dvarapalakas, two have Saiva, two Sakta and the other two Vaishnava symbols. The sukhānasi doorway is flanked by Nandi and Bhṛīṅgi.

The basement has five sculptured bands arranged between the six cornices. The five friezes represent, from bottom upwards, horses and camels, elephants, lions, yalis and yakshas, Puranic scenes and dwarfs, respectively. One particular panel in the defile of Puranic incident, shows Sri Samkara and his pupils; a series of these panels illustrates the story of *Kiratarjuniya*. Above these five defiles, near the doorway, are patterns of chakras.

The larger niches on the walls present various Divine Forms. They include Indra, Siva standing, Vyasa, Prajapatis, Durga on a lion, Rama worshipping a linga, Saturn, Mrityu, Chitrāgupta, Yama, Nṛsiṃha with Lakshmi, Garuda and Hanuman, Brahma and Vani, Umamahesvara, Dakshināmurti, Gayatri, Kalki, Buddha, Venugopala with gopis, Balarama, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana, Parasurama, Vamana and Bali, Ugra Nṛsiṃha slaying Hiranyakasipu, Dharani Varaha, Kurmāmurti, Matsyamurti, Ardhanari, Kala-sambharamurti, Somaskanda, Tripurari, Chandrasekhara, Kama-dahanāmurti, Nataraja, Srikantha, Virabhadra, Chandra, Gajasambharamurti, Hayagriva, Annapurna, Parvati, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Kubera, Bhairava, Bhṛīṅgi, Vyasa and Sankara, Nṛtta Ganesa and Shanmukha.

It is not possible to explain here the symbology of all these sculptured murtis. To the ordinary observer, they represent Puranic themes, but to the mystic and the initiate, they have a far deeper message. And the meditation on any of them will lead to Divine realisation.

There are within the temple bronzes of remarkable beauty which include Siva as Tandavamurti, Srinivasa, Nambi Narayana and Harihara, and a large collection of lingas and salagramas. A figure of Saturn in steel is kept immersed in oil.

From the eaves of the corners of the central hall hang chains of stone rings, which are common in temples of the Vijayanagara period.



The Hindu temple is at once the body and vesture of God ; this particular temple is conceived as a Sri Chakra and is Siva-Sakty-atmaka (of the form of Siva and Sakti in union), and, as such, represents all the tattvas from Siva and Sakti to Prithvi superimposed on the Formless Brahman. The lower panels represent the grosser tattvas symbolised as animals, birds, human beings and minor gods—all presenting a panorama of life which is but a lila or illusory play 'set against the background of eternity.' Above these all along the wallface are plastically represented the forms of Isvara as Creator, Sustainer, Absorber, Indweller, Illuminator and Teacher to satisfy the spiritual cravings of different adhikaris among sadhakas. Each figure is but a note in the symphony of the Absolute. From the darsana of these forms the sadhaka is led to the dark cave, which is the sanctum, to realise the Indwelling Effulgence, which the linga represents. In the process he leaves behind the six gates, representing the six indriyas or sensory organs including the mind, and passes through the central hall where the rasi pillars represent Time. Thus he rises above Time (kala) above form (rupa) and name (nama) and is lost in the contemplation of the Absolute. This mystic temple is a symbol of integration—integration of all forms of worship, Saiva, Sakta, Vaishnava, Saura and Ganapatya; integration of upasana (yoga) and jnana, and integration of Isvara with Form with the Formless, and gives concrete shape to the message of Master Samkara.

To the student of Hindu Iconography this temple is a veritable gallery and store-house of sculptures.

### SAMKARA TEMPLE

Murtis of Sri Sankara are kept in several shrines of the pitha in and out of Sringeri, but the central shrine is in a quadrangle within the matha building north of Sarada temple. Bhagavatpada Sankara is represented as seated in yogasana and showing the *Chinmudra* with the right hand and the *abhaya mudra* with the left.

### MALAHANIKARESVARA TEMPLE

In the heart of the town is the temple of Sri Malahanikaresvara nestling on the top of a hillock and reached by a flight of about hundred steps. The four pillars in the navaranga are artistically sculptured;

Chandra with ten hands deserves attention, and among the other relieves are Nrisimha, Virabhadra, Hanuman, Kaliyamardana, Durga, Rama, Shanmukha, Venugopala and dancers. On the ceiling is carved a lotus bud.

The linga in the sanctum, which stands over the site of Sage Vibhandaka's disappearance from the mortal world, is called Malahanikaresvara ('destroyer of the malas or impurities of the soul'). The shrine of Sri Bhavani was consecrated by Sri Sachchidananda Bharati (1622-63) who also instituted the *rathotsava* (car festival) and *dipotsava* (festival of lights). Sri Sacchidananda Bharati II (1705-41) instituted the *magha* and *Krttika* festivals.

In the prakara is a shrine to Bindu Madhava who is attended by his consorts.

Sri Abhinava Nrisimha Bharati (1599-1622) drew with a piece of turmeric a figure of Sri Ganesa on a pillar at the entrance to the shrine and worshipped it. A strange phenomenon has since happened. The outline of the God gradually bulged out in relief, and the rock sounds hollow at this particular part of the pillar, while above and below, it is hard.

The present structure must have been raised early in the Vijayanagar period, replacing the older one in wood. It was partly renovated in 1621 by Puttappayya, a disciple of the matha.

Under the commands of the present Jagadguru the front was renovated and the *Kumbhabhishekam* was performed in February, 1963.

The Subrahmanyesvara shrine was built in 1760.

## JANARDANA TEMPLE

The origin of the temple may be traced to the pontificate of Sri Jnanaghana Acharya (9-10th century). A copper plate grant of Harihara II dated 1386 mentions endowments to this temple. The form of Vishnu, represented here as Janardana, is of significance. Janardana is He who destroys janma (birth) brought about by ajnana (nescience) and bestows on the worshipper the awareness of his identity with the Lord.

In the subsidiary shrines are Hanuman, Garuda and Sri Sankara whose hands show the varada and cinmudras.

### GURU ADHISTHANAS

Near the southern entrance of the Sarada temple is the adhishthana of Sri Suresvaracharya. To the west of Vidyasamkara temple are adhishthanas, three of which are those of Sri Nrisimha Bharati VII, his guru Sri Abhinava Sacchidananda Bharati II and paramaguru Sri Sachchidananda Bharati III. It is difficult precisely to identify the other samadhis. Many others are situated in quadrangles within residential houses, which originally must have been donated to Brahman priests and scholars who conducted worship in these adhishthanas.

In Nrisimbavana on the south bank of the Tunga is the magnificent shrine built of polished granite containing an inspiring murti in shining marble of Sri Sachchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrisimha Bharati behind a linga, which were both consecrated in 1916 by Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati. Just adjoining this shrine is another similar shrine for Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati.

### OTHER TEMPLES IN AND NEAR SRINGERI

By the side of the Janardana temple is a small temple containing shrines to Sakti Ganapati and Vagisvari. Another closeby is dedicated to Sri Rama with Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman. Two others contain Harihara, an aspect which embodies Sri Sankara's insistence on the identity of Siva and Vishnu; in one of them the Siva part of the murti bears a trisula and a wreath, and the Vishnu part Chakra and Samkha, while in the other the Siva emblems are parasu and damaru and the Vishnu emblems chakra and abhaya mudra. In the former shrine Lakshmi and Parvati flank Harihara, and Nandi and Garuda are carved on the pedestal. Mailara has a small shrine; He is with his consort and holds a damaru, sula, sword and a water vessel. Near Him is Durga.

East of the Mallikarjuna temple is the Honne temple built by Honnana Setti in 1692, dedicated to Visvesvara with subsidiary shrines to Bhairava and Virabhadra. The Nilakantha temple was built by Avadhana Rajagopala Bhatta in 1695 and has a shrine for



Parvati. The Brahmaraksas, locally called Maleyala Brahma, who is said to have accompanied Sri Vidyaranya, has a shrine. He carries a mace. He is usually propitiated before the commencement of feasts in Sringeri.

## GUARDIAN DEITIES

While setting up the monastic foundation in Sringeri, Sri Sankara consecrated as the guardian deities, Kala Bhairava in the east, Durga in the south, Hanuman in the west and Kalika in the north. When plague threatened Sringeri, Sri Sachchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrisimha Bharati prayed to Durga and since then not a single case of plague has occurred there.

About a mile from Sringeri where the Tunga takes a short westerly course (pascimavahini) is the agrahara of Vidyaranya-pura established by Harihara II and named after the great sage. The part of the village called Vasisthasrama is particularly sacred as the place where Sri Vidyatirtha often sat in yoga, to whom there is a small shrine. The Ganapati temple built by Narasimha Bhatta in 1547 and the Sadasiva temple built by Sivappa Nayak are close by. Sankara Narayana is worshipped in Tanikodu, Nrisimha Bharati VI founded the village of Sacchidanandapura. Abhinava Nrisimha Bharati I consecrated in 1602 a linga on a rock of the Tunga in Rudrapada.

At Simhagiri, popularly called Hale Sringeri, is the mysterious statue which Sri Vidyatirtha caused to be made, and the form of which he predicted his entombed body would take if left undisturbed for twelve years. It has four niches. In the eastern niche is a relief of Sri Vidyatirtha himself, flanked by his two disciples, Sri Bharatitirtha and Sri Vidyaranya; on the prabhavali is Lakshmi Nrsimha with His two consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi, flanked by Surya and Chandra. In the southern niche is Brahma; the ten avatars of Vishnu are carved on the prabhavali. In the western niche is Vishnu as Paravasudeva seated on Adishesha; the ten avatars are again represented on the prabhavali. In the northern niche is Sadasiva, with five faces; on the prabhavali are the dikpalas. On top of all is a linga. This statue, which is held in great veneration, is worshipped as Chaturmurti Vidyeshvara.

## JAIN TEMPLE

In this temple are images of three Tirthamkaras Sri Parsvanatha, Sri Anantanatha and Sri Chandranatha; Sri Parsvanatha is the oldest and the other two were installed in 1583, respectively by Devana Setti, son of Devi Setti, of Halumidi, and Bommara Setti, son of Adi Setti. An inscription in this temple dated A. D. 1161, is the earliest lithic inscription in Sringeri. The temple has the usual components, the sanctum, sukhawasi and navaranga.

## KIGGA

Kigga, (corruption of Kilga [கிழ்க]),—also called Marukalu—situated on the Nandini, a tributary of the Tunga, is renowned for its Sringesvara temple which stands on the site where Rishyasringa was absorbed in the celestial light. The antiquity of the place is attested by inscriptions of the seventh century which refer to the deity here as Kilganesvara (கிழ்காணேசுவர) or Kilganadeva or the Lord of Kilga. The linga in the sanctum is shaped like a rudraksha (*Elaeocarpus ganitrus*) bead, with a horn-like projection on top; its left side represent Santa. There is a strong belief that if the linga is properly worshipped, famine will be averted in the land to a distance of twelve yojanas all round. This will recall the *Ramayana* story that sage Rishyasringa's advent removed the acute drought in Romapada's capital.

The navaranga is approached by three entrances and has four sculptured pillars, in one of which the graceful contours of the charming poses of fair danseuses are so arranged as to present the shape of a palanquin supported by antelopes, and supposed to represent the vehicle in which Rishyasringa was borne to Romapada's capital. Valamburi Ganesa and Mahishamardani adorn the shrines in the sukhawasi.

The utsavamurti which was consecrated in 1678, was gifted by Gurubasavappa, an officer of queen Channammaji.

On a stone within the temple are inscriptions of Santara kings—Chitravahana, son of the Alupa king Gunasagara (late 7th century), who ruled from Humcha, and Prithvivallabha (c. A. D. 1090) of the same dynasty.

## BANGALORE—SAMKARA MATHA TEMPLES

Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati laid the foundation of the Samkara matha building in Bangalore in 1907, and later founded an institution for higher Sanskrit studies called the *Bharatiya-Girvana-praudha-vidyabhivardhani*. Diwan V. P. Madhava Rao endowed an agrahara of seven houses. In the open grounds around the matha have since sprung up other residential houses. The main matha building is a magnificent and imposing structure with a spacious lecture hall decorated with a large portrait of Sarasvati.

In front of the matha stand two temples facing each other, charming in their repose and purity of outline. Octagonal in shape, the two are similar in structure. Part of the inner wall round the sanctum of the Samkara temple is pierced so as to display floriate or latticed patterns, while in the Sarada temple opposite, the inner wall is divided into panels enshrining the Matrka Deities. The image of Samkara is in marble, and that of Sarada in bronze. The former was consecrated by Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati in 1907, and the latter by Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati in 1939.

The old matha building is in Sultanpet.

## MYSORE—ABHINAVA SAMKARALAYA

The site surrounding the house in Mysore where Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati was born, was acquired for the Sringeri samsthanam by the Maharaja's Government. A picturesque temple, containing a murti in marble of the great Acharya now adorns the site. Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati consecrated the shrine in 1924, and founded a pathasala.

## KALADY

Nestling in the midst of a landscape of idyllic charm, lies Kalady hollowed in the memory of centuries as the birthplace of Sri Samkara. The river Purna, locally called Churni—the Periyar of the Tamil classics—in summer a clear meandering stream but during the monsoon, a rushing torrent slashing against banks clothed with lush



vegetation, and the verdure of the hills in the distance lend enchantment to the scene. The principal bathing ghat is sacred and calls to memory the years when Sri Samkara and his mother resorted to it for their daily ablutions and particularly the incident of an alligator holding the Master's leg within its jaws, and his asking permission of his mother to renounce the world. Ascending the steps of the ghat one enters holy ground dominated by an asoka tree under which Aryamba's mortal remains were consigned to the elements. A *brndavanam* (altar with a *tulsi* plant) piously built by Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati, who renovated Kalady, now marks the site. Near it is a small shrine to Sakti Ganapati facing the picturesque temple of Sri Sarada. To the west is the equally picturesque temple of Sri Samkara. Both are stellates, the spire rising as a terraced cone. The vimana of the Sarada temple is of the *astapadma* (eight petalled or angled) form, while that of Sri Samkara is *sodasakona* (sixteen petalled). Within the angles round the vimana of the Sarada temple are niches for the Matrkas—Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Mahendri and Chamunda, the deity in the principal shrine also representing Brahmi. The two sanctums have each a small mandapa on a raised plinth, and in front a gabled hall or shed.

The two murtis of Sarada and Samkara resemble those in Sringeri, and, as in Sringeri, the divine aura clothing them enfolds the worshipper with unbounded bliss and a deep sense of peace. Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati consecrated the two temples on February 21, 1910.

To the northwest of the Samkara shrine is the temple of Sri Krishna, a typical west coast structure in wood and with gabled roofs. Here did Aryamba conduct her daily worship. To the northeast of the Sarada temple is the principal matha building for the residence of the Acharya when he visits the place. It also houses a library.

Behind this cluster of monuments stretches an agrahara where reside the teachers and students of the Veda and Vedanta pathasalas, the officers and priests. There is also a guest's house. The Veda and Vedanta Pathasalas were founded by Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati in 1927. Under the orders of the present Jagadguru,

Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Svami, more buildings are coming up. Samkara jayanti, Navaratri and Mahasivaratri are the most important festivals which attract large gatherings of scholars and devotees. The site of these buildings which covers twentyfive acres, was acquired by the Government of Maharaja Rama Varma Sri Mulam Tirunal of Travancore and donated to the Sringeri samsthanam. The Samkara College of Arts and Sceince, which has extensive hostels, is now managed by the *Jagadguru of Sringeri*.

Other places in close vicinity traditionally associated with Sri Samkara and his parents, are the Durga temple in Manikkamangalam, a mile to the north and the Siva temple of Vellimantulli. The family of Suvarnattumanaikkal is descended from a poor lady who became rich by Samkara's grace.

The sanctity and message of Kalady appealed to the holy monks of the Sri Ramakrishna order, who starting on the Samkara jayanti day in 1936, have founded here religious, cultural and charitable institutions.

Kalady (10° 14' N. 76° 45' E.) is five miles from Angamali Railway station, eight miles from Alwaye and thirty miles from Trichur.

## MESSAGES



**HIS HOLINESS**  
**SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA**  
**Founder-President**  
**THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY**

**P. O. Sivanandanagar**  
**Rishikesh (U. P.)**  
**(Himalayas) India**  
**14th November, '58.**

Salutations and prostrations to the Divine Acharya Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada! Prostrations to the illustrious succession of Holy Teachers who have adorned the great Sarada Pitha, perpetuating and enriching the sanctity and glory of the Matha established by that great incarnation of Lord Sankara!

Vedanta is the language of Bharata Varsha's soul. Its message is Unity, Cosmic Consciousness, Cosmic Love and Oneness. It reveals the majesty of man in his essential nature, the foundation of bliss and peace that man can tap if only he would shut his eyes to the deluding glitter of Maya. No one has retold these truths as convincingly as Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada has done. These truths are enshrined in the Sringeri Matha and are kept alive by the great Acharyas who have adorned the Pitha. This story—the story of Real Religion, True Culture, and Enduring Civilisation—is told in this book by a great scholar and saintly seeker after Truth, Sri K. R. Venkataraman. It is bound to acquaint the Sarada Pitha and its present sage-occupant to more and more seekers after Truth, for the good of all mankind. May God bless Sri Venkataraman! May the Sarada Pitha shine for ever as the beacon light of Vedanta! May the blessings of His Holiness the Jagadguru be on us all!

**SWAMI SIVANANDA.**



HIS HOLINESS  
SRI SWAMI SANKARANANDA  
*President*  
RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

P. O. Belur Math,  
Dt. Howrah,

26—11—1958.

Dear Shri Venkataraman,

Our revered President (Srimad Swami Sankarananda) wishes you success in your laudable attempt.

Yours sincerely.  
SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA  
Assistant Secretary

HIS HIGHNESS MAHARAJA  
SRI JAYA CHAMARAJA WADIAR  
OF MYSORE,  
Governor of Mysore State.

The Palace,  
Mysore,  
February 1, 1959.

The Sringeri Jagadguru Samsthanam has been the fountain of faith and philosophy for millions of Hindus, and a historical account of the Samsthanam and its significance should be a valued possession in the home of every true Hindu. It was the timely *avatara* of Sri Adi Sankaracharya that saved Hinduism from decline if not extinction. It was he who revealed to the world the true significance of Advaita by expounding it in his many learned treatises. A line of eminent followers have upheld this great advaitic tradition to this day. The Sringeri Mutt has always occupied a very prominent place in the perpetuation of Sankara's tradition. The history of Sringeri by Sri K. R. Venkataraman is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of a most important centre of Hindu faith. I congratulate him on his *Guru Bhakti* and *Sraddha*. May God bless him!

JAYA CHAMARAJA WADIYAR.

SRI SRI PRAKASA  
Governor of Bombay.

Bombay Governor's Camp,  
December 24, 1958.

My dear Shri Venkataraman,

.....

It gave me much pleasure to learn of your monograph on the Sharadapith. I was glad to read of the appreciations that you have so rightly received for your work. You want a message from me. What message can I send except this that I admire you for your work and wish you all success and happiness in the good cause.

Thanking you for thinking of me,

I am,

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

SRI PRAKASA.

HIS HIGHNESS SRI  
BRAHADAMBADASA RAJA  
RAJAGOPALA TONDAIMAN OF  
PUDUKKOTTAI.

Pudukkottai Palace,  
Cantonment,  
Tiruchirapalli,  
22nd February, 1959.

The Sringeri Matha has for centuries been a very prominent centre of Vedantic culture and spirituality, and it is a matter of joy that its history has been compiled by Mr. K. R. Venkataraman, who was Director of Public Instruction and Officer-in-charge of Research in Pudukkottai. As in his other books and monographs, Mr. Venkataraman has brought to bear upon this book his great scholarship and the results of his research. The book is sure to be welcomed in India and abroad.

R. RAJAGOPALA TONDAIMAN.

Professor K. A. NILAKANTA SASTRI,  
Director,  
Institute of Traditional Cultures,  
South East Asia—UNESCO.

Madras,

25—11—1958.

*Dear Mr. Venkataraman,*

I have read with great interest your excellent monograph on the Sringeri Pitha. It is a comprehensive and well documented history of the great spiritual centre which, in the midst of many vicissitudes, has played a dominant role in the religious development of our country for well over a thousand years since its foundation by Bhagavan Sankara. I am sure that the unique blend you have achieved in the diverse attitudes of a bhakta and a modern historian in your account of the personalities and achievements of a long line of eminent spiritual leaders, the institutions they fostered and the patrons who provided facilities for their work will be much appreciated by readers when the book is published. I congratulate you heartily on this signal work of yours in the sphere most congenial to your pious instinct and scholarly equipment. I hope you will have the book published without undue delay.

Yours sincerely,  
K. A. NILAKANTAN.



DR. HAJIME NAKAMURA,  
Department of Philosophy,  
University of Tokyo,  
Tokyo, Japan.

*The Throne of Transcendental Wisdom* by Mr. K. R. Venkataraman, printed at the Trichinopoly Printers, Tiruchirapalli-2, 1959, is the very kind of book which I have been seeking for many years. This is indeed a masterpiece of exact scholarship and profound erudition. His studies are based upon not only oral tradition, but also historical and epigraphical records which must be reliable. On the occasion of the general assembly of the Japanese Association for the Indian and Buddhist Studies, May 1960, I gave a lecture on Sringeri, and I officially acknowledged the scholarly value of Mr. Venkataraman's work. My paper will be published in a Journal. The pictures published in his work are also fascinating. Any reader must derive much benefit from reading this work, which can fill in the defects of former studies on the Vedanta which have been mainly based upon philosophical treatises in Sanskrit alone.

1960.

HAJIME NAKAMURA.

DR. JEAN FILLIOZAT  
Professeur au College de France  
Paris—  
Directeur de l'Institut français  
d'Indologie—Pondichery

College de France  
Chaire de Langues  
et Litteratures de l'Inde  
Paris, le 3 Fevrier 1959

*English rendering of the original in French.*

Most heartily do we welcome this book by Sri K. R. Venkataraman, who has attempted to trace the, hitherto unpublished but illustrious, history and describe the traditions, organisation and monuments of the Sarada Pitha, one of the most important and 'the elect' of the seats of Philosophy in the world. All lovers of Philosophy and of India will rejoice at the 'evocation' through this book of the great figure of Sri Samkaracarya and of the matha where his thoughts are ever living.

JEAN FILLIOZAT.

Pandit M. S. M. SHARMA, Editor, *The Searchlight*, Patna.

A renowned centre of spiritual endeavour founded by a renowned and peerless Master in the domain of Thought, the Sringeri Pitha developed into a semisovereign State more by accident than by design. The only other institution to which it may, in a measure, be compared is the Papacy, but it differed considerably from the latter, (particularly from the Papacy in the Middle Ages). No pontiff in Sringeri ever promulgated anything like *Dictatus Papae*. What temporal authority he exercised in the past was complementary to that of the State, and he shed it voluntarily and gradually in conformity with the changing times. The influence of the Pitha cannot be contained by any delimitation of territorial jurisdiction; today it holds supreme sway in the hearts and minds of millions of devotees and followers. Dedicated to Sri Sarada, the aspect of the Divine as *Brahmavidya* or *Transcendental Wisdom*,—(this has suggested to the author the title of this book)—the Pitha has, over the centuries, conserved, interpreted and expounded the *Vidya*—(hence its name *Vyakhyana simhasana*)—as the supreme way of life—(hence its other name *Dharmasimhasana*). While studying the growth of this institution, one is tempted to pose the question: *Has this value has a historical study?* What the reader will get is an understanding of one great phase of spiritual endeavour in this land of sages and mystics, which, in the words of Lord Acton, is *an illumination of the soul*, and this, according to him, is the meaning of history.\*

Samkara established harmony among creeds and restated the profound truths of the *Upanishads*. During the next five centuries a vast volume of literature grew round his *bhasyas* and other writings, and on the crest of this wave of scholasticism rode three great sages, Sri Vidyasamkara, Sri Bharatitirtha and Sri Vidyanaya. They and their successors commanded the homage of emperors and chiefs from all parts of India who acknowledged the spiritual primacy of this Pitha. In their tours, the Jagadgurus carried their message to the homes of princes and peasants. Towards the close of the last century Jagadguru Sacchidananda Siva Abhinava Nrsimha Bharati combated the new wave of agnosticism and materialism that had come in the wake of the introduction of western education, as

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\* Report to the Syndics of Cambridge University Press on its Modern History Project.

Paramahansa Ramakrishna had done earlier in Bengal. In Chandra-sekhara Bharati, we have the example of a *risht* of the Upanishadic age. Thousands came under the spell of his spirituality, and his sacred memory will succour and bless generations to come. The present Jagadguru inherits the great traditions of purity, scholarship and tapasya associated with the acharyas of this pitha. He is now on tour, and thousands hearken to his message.

This in brief indicates the *illumination of the soul* that my friend Sri K. R. Venkataraman presents in these pages, and also the *meaning of the history* of Sringeri.

New Patna Annexe,  
Gardiner Road,  
Patna-1  
February 7, 1959. }

M. S. M. SHARMA.



## ADDENDUM

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The Maharaja and the Maharani of Gwalior had made elaborate arrangements for the performance of the pujas and homa. After passing through Agra, Mathura, Brindavan and some other places on the way, the Jagadguru arrived at New Delhi on the evening of 6th November, 1966. An influential reception committee with Mr. S. V. Krishnamurthy Rao, Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Dr. P. S. Lokanathan and others received him at the out-skirts of the City. On his entry into the city a welcome address was presented in Samskrit by Mr. A. N. Jha, the Lt. Governor of Delhi. The Mayor of Delhi Mr. Nur-ud-din Ahmed, the Chief Executive Officer, Ministers, Members of Parliament and other distinguished persons, spoke in different languages welcoming His Holiness. Then the Jagadguru was led in a procession to 10, Akbar Road, which was his head Quarters during his stay at New Delhi. The President, the Vice-President and the Prime Minister sent messages of welcome.

On November 11, 1966, the birth day (*Vardhanti*) of His Holiness was celebrated on an unprecedented grand scale. In the morning the President of India had a private interview with him and then attended the *homa*. He spoke felicitating the Acharya. At the reception in the evening, the Prime-Minister, Mrs. Indhira Gandhi was present and after receiving His Holiness's blessings in a private interview, she spoke at the function, extolling the great services that the Acharyas of Sringeri had rendered and exhorting the audience to abide by the instructions of the Guru. She was followed by Ministers C. Subramaniam, C. R. Pattabiraman and Hathi, Mr. A. N. Jha, Sardar Hukam Singh, Dr. P. S. Lokanathan and Mr. S. Nijalingappa, etc., who spoke in different languages.

Another eventful day was the 20th of November 1966, His Holiness called on the President at the Rashtrapathi Bhavan to return the visit and both of them drove to the site where the Shankara Vidya Kendra in New Delhi had planned to build a fine temple to Sri Saradamba and Sri Samkara housed in the Shankara Advaita

Vidya Asramam. The Rashtrapathi laid the foundation-stone which His Holiness blessed. His Holiness visited the Uttara Swamimalai temple on the Skanda Shasti Day (13th November 1966), also the famous Birla Mandir (Lakshminaryana Mandir), where a tremendous reception was accorded to him. He also visited the Ramakrishna Mission and addressed a large audience. He camped at Mandir Marg, Ramakrishnapuram, etc., to bless the devotees of those divisions of New Delhi. A *vidvat sadas* was organised in which scholars from all over India participated and nyaya, vyakarna, mimamsa and vedanta were discussed among other topics.

New Delhi would be the starting point of an extensive tour of North India. After seven weeks of stay, the Acharya had left New Delhi on January 2, 1967, to continue his pilgrimage of holy places in Northern India. The pilgrimage will take him among other places to Prayag, Varanasi and Nepal. Wherever the Acharya goes, he is assured of an affectionate and respectful welcome worthy of his exalted position. Like the Bharatayatra of Sri Adi Sankaracharya, this Bharatayatra of His Thirty-Fifth Successor on the Sri Sarada Pitha in Sringeri established by Him is sure to bring about a revival of dharma, and a cultural integration of the land.

Wherever the Acharya goes—He radiates grace and benediction to all.

—oOo—

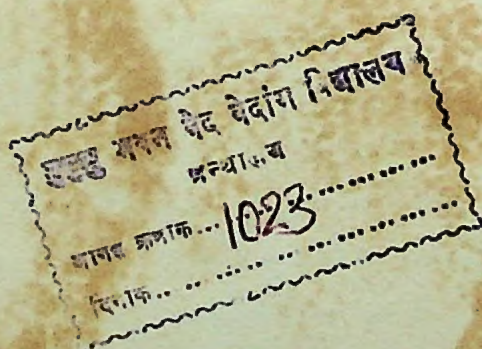
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# ERRATA

Page iii (Introduction)	line 25	Read	investigation.
Page 16	„ 28	„	others.
„ 30	„ 8	„	vidya.
„ 32	„ 18	„	many.
„ 46 f n. 3 (line 3)	„	„	grant.
„ 47	line 24	Fullstop	<i>after</i> library. <i>delete</i> in.
„ 48	„ 15	<i>insert</i>	and <i>after</i> Vairagya.
„ 48 f. n. 8	lines 2-3	Read	Haridranadi.
„ 52	line 28	Read	resettled.
„ 72	„ 15	<i>delete</i>	of <i>before</i> Pawar
„ 86	„ 34	Read	Seldom.
„ 88	„ 12	Put a comma	after 1953 and <i>delete</i> —1—1.
	line 22	Read	received.
	„ 24	„	innate.
„ 92	„ 17	„	celebrate.
„ 97	„ 31	„	celebrations.
„ 98	„ 24	<i>delete</i>	and <i>before</i> Narsipur.
„ 105	„ 5	<i>add</i>	and then visited.
„ 128	line 31	Read	hallowed.



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संस्कृत विश्वविद्यालय

प्रकाशनालय

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